THE FAMILY LIFE OF ISLAM



THE FAMILY LIFE Of ISLAM

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In the Name of Allah,
the Most Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all beings;
the Most Compassionate, the Merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray for succour;
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
who are immune from Thy wrath
and have never gone astray.

0' Allah send your blessings to the head of your messengers and the last of your prophets, Muhammad
and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your prophets and envoys.


بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم
مالك يوم الدين إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين
أنعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم
ولا الضالين
اللهم صل على
سيد رسلك وخاتم أنبيائك
محمد وآله الطيبين الطاهرين
وصل على جميع الأنبياء والمرسلين

Dear Reader,

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You may read this book carefully and should you be interested to have further study on such publications you can contact us through a letter. Naturally, if we find you to be a keen and energetic reader we shall give you a deserving response in sending you some other publications of this Organization.

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Meanwhile, you can keep our address at the disposal of your friends and those individuals interested' in Islamic Studies.

Publications Secretary,

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES
(WOFIS)

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PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

Our Organization is now publishing *The Family Life of Islam*, one of the books of `Allamah Sayyid Sa` id Akhtar Radawi, praise be to Allah, all Power is with Him. Sayyid Radawi is one of the most sincere preachers of Islam and an active scholar, both when he was in Tanzania in the Bilal Muslim Mission (an Islamic organization active in Tanzania), -and also now that he has returned to his own country of India. In the way of spreading Islam, he has rendered numerous services and has been most active. Sayyid Radawi is a successful author of many books on various Islamic subjects, and he has the gift of being able to write in a way which all people can easily under-

stand. He has worked closely with our Organization for many years, and we are proud to have published many of his writings, not only in English, but also in many other languages into which they have been translated.

From Allah we ask for goodness and guidance, and pray that He will keep us far from error and mistake. For He is the best Guide and the only Friend.

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Part One

THE FAMILY

1. IMPORTANCE OF A FAMILY CODE

A sensible and well-balanced family system is the very foundation of a happy life. Ineed, it is the root of an advancing civilization. Religion comes to take human beings nearer to Allah. Therefore, it must create an atmosphere conducive to that ideal; otherwise, it cannot achieve its goal. No religion can be regarded as complete unless it has a well-defined code of family life which expressly shows the exact responsibility and role of each member of the family. The family is a closely-knit unit of human society; and this nearness creates eminent danger of friction and conflict unless every member is told in unambiguous terms what his duties and rights are.

If a religion shuts its eyes to the intricacies of family problems, its followers, sooner or later, will revolt against it, destroying all religious tenets in the wake of that rebellion. The reason is simple; the prevalent environment and social system would not be in harmony with that religion; and the influence of unharmonious society would gradually push them further and further from that religion. Finally a time would come when the religion would have no more than a ceremonial function with little or no effect on life.

A good example would be Christianity which ignored the claims of human nature, extolling the idea of celibacy. Many zealous people tried to live up to that ideal, Monks and nuns shut themselves in monasteries. For a short period, this scheme worked well. Then the nature took its revenge; the monks and abbots cultivated the idea that they were representatives of Christ, and the nuns were given the title of "brides of Christ." So with easy conscience they turned the monasteries into centres of sexual liberties.

Nature can be compared to a steel spring which when pressed down jumps back with equal force. When it took its revenge upon Christians, it turned the Christians societies into the most permissive, libertine and undisciplined ones the world

had ever seen.

This happens when a religion does not conform with nature and when the leaders of religion think that it is quite enough to say `Love thy neighbour' without telling them how.

2. ISLAM AND THE FAMILY SYSTEM

Islam is the Final religion and has the most ideal *shari `ah* (revealed law). An unbiased observer cannot help admiring the equilibrium which it has achieved balancing the demands of body and spirit, providing guidance concerning life in this world as well as teachings concerning life in the hereafter.

It is the Leading Light which brightly illuminates every turning in the highway of human life. It is the Perfect *shari `ah* which did not leave any human need uncared for.

In so far as family-life goes, we see that Islam has unravelled every problem of the family system with such dexterity that one has to accept that it could not be solved in a better way.

One cannot but register astonishment at the attitude adopted by some Christians writers. They seem to be suffering from an inferiority complex

when they compare the Islamic *shari `ah* with their religion which has no *shari `ah* at all. Therefore, they try to imply that, that perfection of *shari `ah* is a "drawback" or that the moral standard of Islamic teachings is not as high as that of Christianity.

3. FAMILY PILLARS

In any family there are those persons without whom a family cannot be regarded as complete. A human being is born of a father and a mother; the parents look after the child and bring it up. This child in turn attains maturity and is joined to a spouse in the golden link of matrimony. Then this couple start their own family. Thus we may say that the persons who form pillars of the family are father, mother, child, husband and wife.

Some people need help in their domestic chores. Therefore, Islam has added the `servant' also in the list.

4. JOINT FAMILY AND SEPARATE FAMILY SYSTEMS

According to sociologists, there are two types of family systems in the world: "The Joint Family System" and "The Separate Family System".

Joint Family System: This system implies that all members of a clan:- father, son, brother, sister, uncle, nephew etc., live together. The in come of the individual is not treated as his personal property, rather it belongs to the family and the expenses of all members are met by that `family income.'

Separate Family System: In this system every-one is responsible for his own immediate depend-ants. His income belongs to him and not to the family.

The Hindu family is a joint family while in Arabia the separate family system prevails. Perhaps it is for this reason that cousins are called 'bro thers' and `sisters' in India, while in Arabia they are just sons and daughters of the uncle or aunt.

And, perhaps it was because of this system that Hindus regard cousins as falling within the prohibited degrees, that is, cousins may not marry each other in the Hindu religion. There is no such prohibition in Islam.

However, both these systems are very old, and each has its advantages and disadvantages.

Joint Family System: Its Advantages and Disadvantages

The Joint Family System is a very good example of humanism, benevolence, mutual trust and co-operation.

Members of a family or clan are branches of the same root. It is only natural that they should remain united in their domestic management and family life. This `togetherness' is expected to create happiness and peace of mind.

Furthermore, this system ensures that those family members who, for any reason, are unable to earn their livelihood do not face destitution and poverty, and thus are spared disgrace and heartaches. This system acts like an Insurance company which accepts all responsibilities at the time of old age, unemployment and sickness, and the family members are saved from the troubling anxiety of tomorrow.

So much about its advantanges. Ironically, these very advantages give rise to its disadvantages. The ease of mind provided by this system some times can be misused by some unscrupulous people. If a member of the family is lazy, he finds it easy enough to live on the fruits of others' labour; he never realizes the importance of earning his

own livelihood. Once he acquires such taste, he will find many excuses to avoid work. After all, why should he exert himself when there are other relatives ready to take his burden on their shoulders?

Unless one is made to realize that one cannot exploit others in this way, one will not make real effort to earn his bread. Neither will he fell ashamed of his useless life.

Furthermore, this system kills the initiative to work harder. If a man exerts himself to the furthest limit and thus earns more, his standard of living, naturally, would be much higher than a person earning less. If a man earns twice as much as his brother, common sense says that their standards of living must be different accordingly. But the Joint Family System does not allow it. And the drive to exert onself more, and to earn more, dies.

The most serious defect of this system is that, instead of creating harmony, love and trust in the family (as it is supposed to do), it becomes the chief cause of domestic strife. When a man works hard to meet the expenses of the Joint Family while his brother spends his time in roaming the streets aimlessly; or when he exerts himself to earn as much money as possible, while the brother throws away his chances of advancement, the

resulting ugliness in the family relations is beyond description. Family members begin hating each other, tempers flare on the slightest pretext; suspicion, anger and hatred fill the place of trust, love and happiness. The atmosphere of the house gradually turns into a living hell and then comes a time when separation remains the only remedy.

Separate Family System: Its Advantages and Disadvantages

The Separate Family System does not suffer from the disadvantages mentioned above of Joint Family System, nor does it have its advantages.

To remain aloof from one's own relatives is likely to kill the finest of human instincts. This system may breed selfishness and meanness. Those who look upon mankind as if raised on a high pedestal feel that the whole of mankind is akin to the limbs of one body - humanity; but the Separate Family System turns brothers into strangers, who may meet several times a day but do not care for one another.

5. THE WISE SYSTEM OF ISLAMIC SOCIETY

Now, let us look at the wise system of Islam. Here we find that Islam has laid down a straightforward highway with such skill that a man walk ing on it may enjoy the sweet smell of both these systems, and still not be beset by the thorny problems of either. How?

Islam removed the basic cause of lethargy by decreeing that everyone is responsible for the expenses of his own dependants: he has no right to put the burden of his children, for example, on the shoulders of other relatives. Thus, the evil effects of the Joint Family System were avoided; at the same time, everyone was emphatically enjoined to "keep the bond of relationship intact." This prevented the tendency to selfishness and aloofness from one's own flesh and blood.

6. DEPENDANTS

In principle, the dependants (whose responsibility MUST be borne in any case) was limited:

عن الصادق (ع) :

أُما لوجوه التي فيها اخراج الاموال في جميع وجوه الحلال المفترض عليهم وجوه النوافل كلها ، فأربعة وعشرون وجها . . . واما الوجوه الخمس التي تجب عليها لنفقة لمن تلزمه نفسه فعلى ولده ووالديه وامرأته و مملوكه لازم له ذلك في حال العسر واليسر .

(تحف العقول)

al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.)* said:

The ways to spend (one's) wealth are twenty-four in all . . . Thus, the five ways in which spending money is obligatory (wajib) are the expenses of the maintenance of his dependants, of his children, his father and mother, his wife and his slave. These are obligatory upon him whether he be hard-up or affluent.

But if he is affluent and well-to-do, then he has been emphatically enjoined to spend on other relatives also. The same *hadith* (tradition) goes on to say

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* (a.s.) is the abbreviation of -Arabic phrase *`alayhi* (or *ha /himu)'s-saldm* (may peace be upon him/her/them).

واما الوجوه الخمس من وجوه الصلات النوافل فصلة من فوقه ،وصلة القرابة ، وصلة المؤمنين ، والتنفل في وجوه الصدقة والبر ، والعتق .

> And the five strongly recommended expenses are: Dedication of perpetual gift, doing good to one's relatives, doing good to other believers, recommended charity and emancipation of slaves.

This *hadith is* narrated in Wasa'il *ash-Shi `ah.* There are numerous *ahadith* (traditions) extolling the virtues of doing good to one's relatives, which will be mentioned in appropriate chapters.

An interesting point to ponder over is that the Hindus, in spite of their Joint Family System (or should it be said, `because of it?') never felt such intense love towards their relatives as was seen in the Arabs in spite of their Separate Family System, and that Islam upheld that love to a reasonable extent.

One cannot help but admire how Islam has interwoven the "family sympathy" of the Joint Family System with the "legal orderliness" of the

Separate Family System. There is no escape from admitting that such a beautiful as well as perfect family system was never adopted before Islam.

After all, what is the use of a joint family in which two Hindus (even if they are father and son) are not allowed by their religious customs to eat together? And what is the harm of a separate family if the people are encouraged to eat in one another's house and thus strengthen the bonds of love and relationship?

7. SECLUSION OF WOMEN

Islamic civilization, which is based upon the principle that women should not mingle with men, emphasizes separate domestic arrangements. With the influence of Hindu culture, Indian Muslims gradually adopted the Joint Family System. As a result, that very important Islamic principle has been sacrificed and it has, in its wake, disturbed many other important aspects of Islamic society. The following ayah (verse) needs careful study:

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ
وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ

عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ
آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ
أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ
نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي
الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى
عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ
مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُفْلِحُونَ * (النّور ، ٢٤ : ٣١)

And say to the believing women that they should lower their eyes and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers, or their sons or their husbands' sons or their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women or those whom their right hands

possess, or those male servants who are free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the hidden things of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O' ye believers! turn ye all together towards Allah, that ye may attain bliss. (Qur'an, 24: 31)

This list does not include the husband's brothers nor his nephews. A Muslim woman must, therefore, keep aloof from them as well as from other strangers.

But the Joint Family System does not allow adherence to this important rule. And once a Muslim woman shows her beauty to the brother or nephew of her husband, she has broken out of the secure boundary of the Islamic commandment, and once the limit is crossed, there is no saying where this "showing off" will end, or whether it will end at all.

Another *ayah* in the same *surah* clearly shows that one should not put the burden of his domestic arrangement even on one's parents forever, one must be self-reliant and self-supporting. The *ayah* is as follows

لَيْسَ عَلَى ... حَرَجٌ ... وَلَا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ
أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ آبَائِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ
أَوْ بُيُوتِ إِخْوَانِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخَوَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَعْمَامِكُمْ
أَوْ بُيُوتِ عَمَّاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخْوَالِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ خَالَاتِكُمْ
أَوْ مَا مَلَكْتُمْ مَفَاتِحَهُ أَوْ صَدِيقِكُمْ ...

(النّور، ۲۴: ۶۱)

There is no blame upon . . . yourselves that ye eat (without asking permission) *in your own houses or the houses of your fathers, or houses of your mothers, or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your fathers' brothers, or the houses of your fathers' sisters, or the houses of your mothers' brothers or the houses of your mothers' sisters, or in houses of which the keys are in your possession, or in the house of a friend of yours . . .* (Qur'an, 24: 61)

The *ayah* clearly mentions separate `houses' for fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts, etc. It shows that there is a difference, in

the eyes of Islam, between `your house' and the `houses of your fathers' and `houses of your brothers', for example

The harmony and unity which must be created by following this law is self-evident. Eating in one another's houses is the surest way of creating love and friendship.

Question: There was a Separate Family System in Arabia. Was it not because of this that the Qur'an mentioned separate `houses' for each relative ?

Answer: Islam had not come to follow the Arabs or anybody else. It had come to lead the whole mankind including the Arabs. There were hundreds of customs - good and bad - in Arabia at the advent of Islam. Islam eradicated all evil and defective customs and rites, and allowed only those systems to continue which were desirable from its own point of view.

If Islam had not liked the family system of the Arabs, it could easily have changed it. But instead, the Qur'an mentions that system without any hint of objection, thus endorsing it.

We find many examples in the lives of the Holy Prophet and *hisAhlu'l-bayt* (family members) which prove that they had adopted Separate Family System in their lives.

There was famine in Mecca in 35 Amu'l fil (the year of the Elephant). Abu Talib had many children and his means of livelihood were limited. The Holy Prophet felt that Abu Talib was facing difficulties. He suggested to `Abbas (another of his uncles), who was wealthy, to share the burden of Abu Talib. `Abbas went with the Holy Prophet to Abu Talib and it was decided that `Ali should live with the Holy Prophet, Ja'far with `Abbas and `Aqil was to remain with Abu Talib.

This fact proves that the domestic arrangement of the Holy Prophet was separate from that of Abu Talib. There is no need to remind the readers that the relationship between Abu Talib and the Holy Prophet was more tender and loving than is between a father and his son.

This event, while confirming the Separate Family System, clearly shows the other aspect of Islamic family code: "Keeping the bonds of relationship strong."

During the last *Ramadan* of his life, Amir al-mu'minin, `Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) used to break his fast one day at the house of al-Imam al-Hasan

(a.s.), next day at the house of al-Imam al-Husayn (a. s.), the third day at the house of `Abdullah ibn Ja'far, his son-in-law.

This fact, again, shows both aspects of the Islamic code: Separate Family arrangements and "keeping the Bonds of Relationship strong."

These two examples are sufficient to guide Muslims in their daily life. If any Muslim ventures to deviate from this straight path, he will no longer remain on the path of Islam.

In short, Islam has brought for mankind a Family System which combines the good features of both family systems mentioned earlier and has weeded out the evil aspects of both. It has the legal straight-forwardness of the Separate Family System as well as the harmony and sympathy of the Joint Family System.

And it is only by following this Islamic code that mankind can obtain peace of mind in this life and everlasting happiness in the life hereafter.

* * * * *

Part Two

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

8. PARENTS AND CHILDREN

. . آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفْعًا . . .

(النِّسَاء ٤٠ : ١١)

Your parents and your children, ye know not which of them are nearest to you in benefit. (Qur'an, 4:11)

This *ayah* shows the Islamic attitude towards the relationship between parents and children. From infancy to adulthood, it is unparalleled tender love and care of the parents which brings the child from the stage of absolute weakness and helplessness to perfect strength and independence.

Conversely, in old age a man becomes like a small child; the mind and body turn so weak that Allah says

وَمَنْ نُعَمِّرْهُ نُنَكِّسْهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ ... (يٰسٓ ، ٣٦ : ٦٨)

If We grant long life to any, We cause him to be reversed in nature . . . (Qur'an, 36:68)

Yesterday, your parents looked after you when you were too feeble to look after yourself; today you must look after them.

9. WHY SO MUCH EMPHASIS ON THE RIGHTS OF PARENTS?

Here is a point to ponder over: We do not find in the Qur'an and *hadith so* much emphasis on looking after the children as is the case with the rights of the parents. Why?

The *shari `ah* has put a new challenge to those who think. Find out how logical this attitude is.

The fact is that the parent's heart is the fountainhead of the love for the child; this affection becomes the life-blood of the parents. The Qur'an

has alluded to this instinctive parental love in several places.

On the other hand, children especially when they are no longer in need of parental care, do not feel so much love for the parents. We are not speaking about respect. Here the talk is about instinctive love; and experience is a reliable witness to confirm this observation

It is a known fact that sign-posts are not needed on straight highways; but at a cross-roads where several routes branch out, one cannot expect to get onto the right path without a guide or a sign-post.

It is for this reason that Islam does not emphasize in so many words those aspects of life which are taken care of by human nature itself. It is where the hold of natural instinct is loosened that Islam extends its helping hand and leads man on the right path by telling him what he is expected to do.

It was for this reason that Islam did not explain the rights of children so forcefully; but full emphasis was given to the rights of the parents, as will be observed in coming chapters.

10. RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

The Holy Prophet said to `Ali (a.s.)

> O' `Ali, there are as many rights of children incumbent upon parents as there are rights of parents incumbent upon children.

Rights and duties are inter-related. The right of `A' is the duty of `B'. Although, as mentioned above, natural parental love was a sufficient surety for the upkeep, welfare and upbringing of the child, Islam prepared some wonderful guidelines for the parents.

There are many important turning points in human life - right from birth to adulthood - in which a wrong step may prove fatal for happiness and success - both of this world and of the life hereafter.

Most important is education and character-building. Here are a few sign-posts concerning these two aspects

NAME: Amir al-mu'minin, `Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) said

> The first beneficence of a parent towards his child is to give him a good name; therefore, you should name your child with a good name.

It is a fact that good names may have a good influence on the mind of a person. A child hears his name day and night; and it is reasonable to be lieve that the meaning of that name sub-consciously strengthens those characteristics which are implied in that name. Of course, it does not mean that no evil person has a good name. What is emphasized here is the fact that a name has a psychological effect on the person, provided it is not countermanded by rearing or society.

A bad name has one more tangible evil effect. Whenever that name is announced, the person will feel embarrassment and the name will become a source of constant irritation, effecting his outlook of society. Hence the emphasis in *ahadith* on giving good names to children.

The Holy Prophet used to emphasize this aspect of life so much that al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "(The Apostle of Allah) used to change the bad names of people and places."

It is recommended that the child should be named after the Holy Prophet and his family. Strangely enough, nowadays people name their children after film actors and actresses. This trend points to a far deeper malady of our society.

It shows that now our daily life and dominating thoughts have lost their connection with

the founder of Islam and his family. Now we are glorifying those whose lives are diametrically opposed to Islamic tenets; and who depend on hardm (forbidden) actions for their livelihood. By giving our children the names of such anti-Islamic persons, we are teaching our children not to care about Islam in their lives.

11. THREE STAGES OF LIFE

From infancy upto the age of 21-22 years, one's life may be divided into three stages:

The First Stage is upto the age of 7. Ancient philosophers were of the opinion that the human mind in the very beginning is completely blank, and it is only gradually that it starts using the faculties of sight, hearing etc.

During childhood, it becomes strong enough to understand common words and ideas and associate names with objects. Still it is not developed enough to bear the strain of logical reasoning and abstract ideas.

That theory basically is accepted even today. And tests and experiments have led modern psychologists to believe that as a general rule the child's mind upto the age of 7 and 8 years is not

strong enough to grasp book knowledge. Children who are required to cram pages and pages of books at such a tender age suffer a lot and their originality is sacrificed on the altar of written pages.

The Second Stage begins at 8 years and goes to 14-15 years. In this period the mind remains alert and easily grasps logical reasoning and abstract theories. The child's interest in acquiring knowledge is at its peak at this age. The freshness of mind and ability to learn more is never as marvellous as is in this period. This is because the curiosity to learn about the unknown is generally not bridled by any responsibility.

The Third Stage is after 14-15 years. The human mind becomes strong; adolescence opens new horizons before the eyes. Sex, marriage, domestic life and its complex problems come to the fore. The child of yesterday is the youth of today. He appreciates that soon he will be required to look after himself; he knows that every passing day brings him nearer to the responsibilities of a family with all that that entails.

These thoughts prepare him to exert himself to earn his own livelihood, and he starts looking for a way to do so.

In this perspective let us look at the following *ahadith* and see how our Divine philosophers explained these aspects of life which modern psy chologists have discovered after hundreds of experiments

1) al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a. s.) said

Let your child play upto seven years (1 st stage) ; and keep him with you (for study etc.) for another seven years (2nd stage) ; then if he succeeds (well and good) ; otherwise, there is no good in him.

2) The Holy Prophet said

The child is the master for seven years (1 st stage) ; and a slave for seven years (2nd stage) and a vizier for seven years (3rd stage) ; so if he builds a good character within 21 years, well and good, otherwise leave him alone because (if you looked after him for 21 years) you have discharged your responsibility before Allah.

As the first stage is a care-free period, it has been called mastership; the 2nd stage means taking orders from teachers and parents, therefore it has

been called slavery; in the third stage the child is expected to help his parent in earning his livelihood, so it has been named viziership.

For each of these periods, the Islamic *shari `ah* has given some guidelines.

12. INSTRUCTION FOR THE THREE STAGES

First Stage: It has been explained that the child should not be burdened with books in this period. But this does not mean that his mind's faculties remain suspended. On the contrary, the atmosphere of society continuously influence the child's mind, though he himself is not aware of this process. Therefore, it is essential to give utmost priority to the proper upbringing and character-building.

The best way to inculcate good behaviour in children is to behave with them with good grace. In this way, they will learn etiquette, good behaviour and noble character. The Holy Prophet said: "Respect your children and teach them good behaviour, Allah will forgive (your sins)."

It is emphasized that children should be kept in a good environment. The Holy Prophet

said: "O' `Ali, it is among the rights of the child on his father to . . . teach him good manners and keep him in good society."

Also, it is desirable to gradually give them religious training, because the impressions gained in childhood are very difficult to erase and if res pect and love of religion is infused in his mind in childhood, he will always remain attached to the religion. The syllabus of such training is given in the following *hadith*

`Abdulldh ibn Fadl narrates from al-Imam Muhammad al-Bdqir (a.s.) or al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a. s.)

> When the child reaches 3 vears. teach him seven times to recite لا اله الا اللّه (la ilaha *illa '* llah) . Then leave him at that till he is 3 years 7 months and 20 days old; then train him to say محمّد رسول اللّه (Muham-*madun rasulu 'llah).* Then leave him at that till he completes 4 vears. then teach him seven times to say صلّى اللّه على محمّد و آل محمّد *(salla 'llahu ala Muhammadin wa aali Mu-hammad).* Then leave him at that till he reaches the age of 5 years; then ask him which one is his right hand and which one is the left. When he knows it then make

him face *giblah* and tell him to do *sajdah* (prostration). This is to continue till he is 6 years of age. Then he should be told to pray and taught *ruku* ` (to kneel down) and *sajdah.* When he completes 7 years, he should be asked to wash his face and hands, and then told to pray. This will continue till he reaches the age of 9 years, when he should be taught proper *wudu'* (ritual ablution before prayer - and should be punished if he is not careful) and proper *salat* (prayer - and should be punished if he is not regular). When he learns proper *wudu'* and *saldt* Allah forgives the sins of his parents.

Every sentence of this valuable *hadith* deserves attention. See how gradually the child is taught his duties of the *shari`ah* without putting any burden upon him. Of course, a child may be taught *wudu'* and saldt in a short period of 3-4 days when he is 12 or 13 years old. But that crash-programme training will not have the benefits of that gradual and early training recommended in the *hadith.*

Second Stage: Now comes the period of formal education. It is the most crucial period of life, the foundation-stone of the future. Islam directs

that in this period a child should first be given necessary religious education so that he may not be misled by anyone in belief or action.

al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.)said:

Make haste in teaching your youngsters *hadith* before they are approached by murji *'a* or Murji'ite (a wrong sect).

Children are like a green, tender branch; they may easily be bent in any direction. If they are not given proper religious education at this stage, then only Allah can save them from misleading influences.

Unfortunately, our people do not care at all about this instruction. There was a time when the teaching of the Qur'an and elementary religious subjects was a MUST. Alas! now our children in quite a tender age are sent to such institutions where unconspicuously they are saturated day in and day out with anti-religious propaganda. No wonder that when they grow up the anti-religious feeling also grows up to become a deep-rooted bias.

In 1948 the writer had occasion to visit a village of Ithna `asharis. On asking questions it appeared that even aged people did not know usul *ad-din* (principles of religion) or the names of the Imams. It was one village. How may other such

villages must be in the length and breath of Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent? It is a frightening thought.

The Holy Prophet emphasized the teaching of two things to male children. He said: "It is the right of the male child on his father to . . . teach him the Book of Allah . . . and riding and swimming."

al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said that it is the duty of the father to teach his son writing.

These traditions guide us to compulsorily include `Religion', `physical training' and writing in the syllabus of male children. In addition, other subjects (which are in conformity with the aptitude of the child or are necessary for earning his livelihood) may be added. In other words, the above-mentioned three are compulsory subjects while others are optional.

A separate syllabus has been prepared for the girls. The earlier mentioned *hadith* of the Holy Prophet goes on to say

> And if the child is female then it is her right that she . . . should be taught the *surah* of `Light' and she should not be taught the surah of Yusuf and should not be allowed to go on the roof or windows.

According to the Qur'an and traditions, what she is obliged to learn and do is as follows:

She must learn the fundamentals of faith and the commandments of the *shari `ah;* and obey her husband by allowing him his conjugal rights.

But she is not obliged to earn her livelihood; nor is she duty-bound to take up the drudgery of domestic work. Similarly, it is not her duty to bur den herself with matters concerning the general welfare of society, nor to learn various subjects other than those mentioned above, nor to participate in industrial or agricultural ventures.

She is not obliged to do so. But if she acquires such additional knowledge, or perform her domestic work, or participates in matters useful to society, it will be regarded as her additional excellence, provided she keeps within the limits of *hijdb* (woman's veil) imposed upon her by the *shari `ah*

To sum it up, the girls should be given such an education which makes them the "Light of the Home" not a "Decoration of Public places."

Our readers should note that even a part of the Qur'an (i.e., *surah* of Yusuf) is not permitted to girls to learn because it contains the references to the love of Zulaykha towards Prophet Yusuf (a.s.). Seeing this restriction, those Muslims who allow their children (and especially girls) to read

sexy novels, visit cinemas where they are practically taught all kinds of obscene thoughts and deeds should be ashamed of their irresponsible behaviour. Such parents should be ashamed of themselves, if they have an iota of Islamic feelings left in their hearts.

Third Stage: This is the period of earning one's livelihood. But it is not possible to go into the details of "Livelihood" here.

Also, this is the period when children should get married. And much emphasis has been given to getting girls married as soon as possible.

The Holy Prophet said that it is the right of the girl upon her father that he should make haste in sending her to the house of her husband.

It is very unfortunate to see many Muslims nowadays ignoring and neglecting this responsibility till the girls sometimes reach the age of 35 or 40 years; and then nobody wants to marry those old maids. The harm which is done by this "irresponsible parenthood" is too obvious to need any description. But the sad facts is that their attitude is governed by snobbery - sometimes it is financial superiority and sometimes it is caste or clan - and those people would rather let their daughters grow

into old spinsters than marry them to a young man of good character who is not equal to their financial or tribal status. The Holy Prophet said that "Every believer is equal in status (in matter of marriage) to any other believer." But we are so much influenced by un-Islamic cultures (based on caste or race system) that we tend to look down upon our bright Islamic culture. May Allah have mercy upon us.

The same *hadith* guides us about male child-ren; that they should be married when they be-come mature. It does not necessarily mean that the boys should be married just after reaching the age of 15 years.

The first marriage of the Holy Prophet was performed when he was 25 years of age. Amir al-mu'minin `Ali (a.s.) also married Fatimatu'z Zahra' (a.s.) when he was 25 years old. But even then, there is no criterion for age. The only thing which matters is that when a young man becomes emotionally mature and he feels an urge to enter into matrimonial relationship then he should get married without any delay. It is a condition which cannot be measured by age or time.

At this stage the parents' responsibility to-wards their offsprings comes to an end. If anyone brings up his children remaining within these

Islamic limits, then that child surely will be the apple of the parents' eyes and the delight of their hearts; and it is this child who, in his turn, may be hoped to fulfil his obligation towards his parents.

Referring to such offspring, the Holy Prophet said that "The virtuous child is a flower from the flowers of Paradise." Also he said: "Among the good fortunes of a man is the virtuous child."

13. RIGHTS OF PARENTS

Allah says in *Hadith al-Qudsi*

> *I swear by My Glory and Power that if a* (child who is) *disobedient to his parents comes to me with all the good deeds of all the prophets, I will not accept them from him.*

The parents proceed to the old age side by side with the progress of the children towards youth. Naturally the love and kindness of the parents and their efforts in caring for the children MUST be reciprocated by the children with obedience and help.

In this world, it is the parents who are the cause of the existence of the child; it is they who

strive to bring it up; it is they who endeavour and look forward to take it to the height of perfection.

If there is anyone, after the Creator, who is directly responsible for the existence and progress of the child, it is parents. Metaphorically speaking, the parents are the lords of their children. It is for this reason that the Qur'an has, in many places, mentioned the obedience of the parents side by side with the worship of Allah.

وَاعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ
إِحْسَانًا . . . (النّسآء ، ۴ : ۳۶)

And worship Allah and join not any partner with Him and do good to parents . . .
(Qur'an, 4:36)

وَقَضَى رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا . . .
(الإسرآء ، ۱۷ : ۲۳)

And thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents
(Qur'an, 17:231)

It seems that the lordship of parents is a mirror of the Lordship of Allah. Right from birth to weaning, and from protection to upbringing, at every stage it is the parents who are the means of conveying the Grace of Allah to the child. Likewise, the rights of the parents are very much akin to the rights of Allah.

The rights of Allah may be divided into three categories

First: The right upon the "soul", e.g., the knowledge of Allah.

Second: The right upon the "body", e.g., prayer and fast.

Third: The right upon "property and wealth", e.g., *zakat* and *khums* (religous tax).

The rights of the parents also may be divided into these very categories:

First let us look at this *ayah* of the Qur'an (together with the explanation of al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq [a.s.] given in parenthesis)

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا
إِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ
لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا * وَاخْفِضْ
لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا
رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا * (الإسراء ، ١٧ : ٢٣ – ٢٤)

And thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him and that ye be kind to parents, (behave kindly with them and do not compel them to bring their needs to your attention; but fulfil their requirements before they have to tell you, even though in reality they are not in need of your assistance) ; if *one or both of them attain old age in thy life,* (and become angry with. you) *say not to them a single word of contempt, and (if* they beat *you) repel them not; but address them in terms of honour* (and respect, i.e., say to them `May Allah forgive you') *and, out of*

> *kindness, lower to them the wing of humility* (and whenever you look at them, look with gentleness and kindness; do not raise your voice upon their voices, nor your hands above their hands; nor walk before them) ; *and say: "My Lord! bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood."* (Qur'an, *17:23-24)*

This explanation covers all three rights of parents: To cheerfully bear the hardship inflicted by parents, to talk to them gently, and not to raise your hands and voice above theirs and not to precede them in any way, all these injunctions cover the obedience by the body. To look at them with kindness and mercy and always to ask Allah's Mercy for them shows love. And to fulfil their needs before their demand concerns the rights on wealth. And thus the similarity between the rights of Almighty Lord and these metaphorical lords reaches the last point of completion.

Now, let us look at this in more details with the help of traditions.

14. THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE FINANCIAL RIGHTS OF ALMIGHTY ALLAH AND PARENTS

Firstly: Almighty Allah (Who is the Lord of not only man and his wealth but of the whole universe) has no need to demand any part of man's wealth in His name. Still, He prescribed a portion from it as offering to Himself. So these weak-structured metaphorical lords (i.e. parents) have more right to benefit from the earnings of their children; to enjoy the fruits of the garden which they developed so lovingly in their early life. Even if they are not in need of such assistance, their metaphorical lordship demands that the children should offer them a part of their earning as a tribute. It is for this reason that al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said that you should "Fulfil their requirements . . . even if they in reality are not in need of your assistance."

Secondly: Also, we have to look at the fact that, though Allah has a right to demand financial tribute from every person, He has made it compul sory only on those who have a specified amount of wealth; and for others, the spending in the 'way of Allah' has been highly recommended (but

not compulsory). Thus a vast field for the test of the gratitude to AIM has been opened for us. Likewise, we see that everyone has been exhorted to give financial help to their parents.

. . . قُلْ مَآ أَنفَقْتُم مِّنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ . . .

(البقرة ، ٢: ٢١٥)

. . . (O' Prophet), *tell them that whatever* (wealth) *ye spend, it is* (primarily) *for parents and relatives* . . . (Qur'an, 2:215)

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا . . .

(الاحقاف، ٤٦: ١٥)

And We exhorted man to do good to parents (Qur'an, 46:15)

But this obligation towards the parents is only at the time when the child has ability to maintain himself and his wife and is still able to help the parents provided the parents need his help. If either of the conditions is not fulfilled, there remains no compulsory obligation; but the emphasized recommendation to help the parents remains in its place, because al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a. s.) said

These expenditures are essential for him whether he be affluent or in a strait condition.

Furthermore, if we look at the *ahadith* which repeatedly exhort a man to look after his parents and keeep them comfortable, we will have to ad mit that spending on the comforts of the parents is highly emphasized even if the child is himself poor and even if the parents are not in need of his help.

Thirdly: It is known that the worship of Allah is one of the important ways of attaining prosperity and happiness. It is said in *surah Nuh:*

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا * يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ
عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا * وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ
لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا *

(نوح ، ٧١: ١٠-١٢)

So I said to them, `Ask forgiveness from your Lord; for He is Oft-forgiving; He will send rain to you in abudance, and will give you increase in wealth and sons, and bestow

on you gardens and bestow on you rivers (of flowing waters)." (Qur'an, 71:10-12)

Likewise, Allah has made the obedience to parents and financial help to them a means of expanding livelihood and sustenance and longevity of life, so that even poor children should look after their parents by their own will in the hope of getting increased sustenance and prosperity. The Holy Prophet of Islam has said

> Anyone who likes long life and increased livelihood should do good to their parents; because doing good to them is in fact obeying Allah.

Another tradition from al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) has the same meaning, but instead of long life, it mentions ease at the time of death. And surely all the promises of Allah are true.

15. ACCORING TO THE RIGHT OF LOVE

Before explaining this subject, it is necessary to mention that, according to our faith, love for the Holy Prophet and his family is an integral part of love for Allah. So we will not look at the

similarity between the love of parents and love of A11ah. Instead, we will consider the similarity between the love for parents and love for *Ahlu'l-bayt (a.s.)*.

First: Allah has made the enmity of the rightful *wasi* (successor) of the Holy Prophet a criterion of illegitimacy and it surely leads to Hell. Abu Zubayr al-Makki says: "I heard Jabir ibn `Abdillah al-Ansari saying, `O' People of *ansar*, teach your children the love of `Ali, and if any-one rejects it then investigate the morality of his mother." This saying of Jabir ibn `Abdillah al-Ansari is based upon the tradition of the Holy Prophet.

Now here is a similar *hadith* about parents:

> Anyone who beats his parents is an illegiti-mate child.

Second: The *hadith* of the Holy Prophet about Fatimatu'z-Zahra' (a.s.) is accepted by all the Muslims that

> Fatimah is a part of mine; whosoever hurts her, hurts me; and whosoever hurts me hurts Allah.

Likewise, the Holy Prophet said about the parents

> Anyone who hurts his parents hurts me; and one who hurts me hurts Allah; and whosoever hurts Allah is cursed in *Tawrat, Injil, Zabur* and Qur'an.

The Holy Prophet, in one *hadith,* has described himself and `Ali (a.s.) as fathers of this *ummah:* "`Ali and I are Fathers of this *ummah."* One of the reasons of this description may be to show the greatness and importance of the parents of his *ummah.*

Anyhow, the net result of all these *ahadith* is that love for parents is a part of love for Allah; and, as the man who disobeys or has enmity to wards the beloved ones of Allah, is an enemy of Allah and far from Paradise, likewise the person who hurts the feelings of his parents is an enemy of Allah and far removed from Paradise.

16. ACCORDING TO THE RIGHT OF OBEDIENCE

Love and obedience are two inseparable things. Love is like the flame of a lamp and obedi-

ence is like its light. Thus, after exhorting the children to love their parents it is but natural to expect them to obey them. And in this respect also obedience of parents is a mirror of obedience of Allah. The *ayat* (verses) mentioned in the beginning are enough to show this aspect. Furthermore, the following similarity is worthy of attention:

First Similarity: Allah says in the Qur'an

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَ يَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ
يَشَاءُ ... (النّساء ، ۴ : ۴۸)

Verily, Allah forgives not that anything be associated with Him; but He forgives what is besides that of whomsoever He wishes (Qur'an, 4:48)

Likewise, it is said in *Hadith al-Qudsi:*

Tell (O' Prophet), *to the child who is obedient to his parents: "Do whatever* (good deeds) *you want* (to do), *you will never enter the Fire* (of Hell);" *and say to the child who is disobedient to his parents: `Do whatever* (good deeds) you want (to do), you will *never enter Paradise. "*

But there is a difference. The Almighty Allah is above all rulers and superiors; therefore, His commandments can never be superceded by any other rule, regulation or oder. But the superiority of parents is derived from the superiority of Allah; their authority is based upon the commands of Allah. Therefore, if ever they give any order which is agaisnt the Law of Allah, it must be ignored and disobeyed. Allah says in the Qur'an

وَ وَصَّينا الإنسان بوالِدَيه حملته امّه وهناً على وَهْنٍ
وَ فِصالُه في عامَيْنِ اَنِ اشكُرْ لي وَ لِوالِدَيک اِلَيَّ
المَصيرُ * وَ اِنْ جاهَداکَ عَلَى اَنْ تُشرِکَ بي ما لَيْسَ
لَکَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلا تُطِعْهُما وَ صاحِبْهُما في الدُّنيا
مَعْروفاً . . . (لقمان ، ۳۱ : ۱۴–۱۵)

And We enjoined on man (to be good) *to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him; and in two years was his weaning: Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents. To Me is your return. And if they strive to make you join in worship with Me things of which you have no knowledge, obey them not; yet bear them company in this life with fairness and consideration ... (31 :14-15)*

The following *hadith* refers to the above mentioned *ayah*

> al-Imam `Ali ibn Musa ar-Rida (a.s.) said that the Holy Prophet said: "Verily, Allah has ordered three things joined with three other things. He ordered prayer and *zakat* (wealth-tax), so if someone prayed and did not pay *zakat*, his prayer will not be accepted; and ordered to show gratitude to Him and to his parents, so if anyone did not thank his parents, he did not thank Allah; and ordered to fear Him and join the relationship, so if anyone did not join his relationship, he did not fear Allah."

Likewise, al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

> There are three things in which Almighty Allah has not given any option to his servant: To return to the owner the thing entrusted to one's care, whether the owner be a pious or a debauchee; and to fulfil the promise whether it was (made) to a pious or a debauchee; and to do good to parents whether they be pious or sinners.

Second Similarity: Now comes a very interesting aspect of this discourse: Allah is Everliving and Self-existent; He is Eternal; He can never die, nor can His `Lordship' and `Rule' ever come to end.

But the life of a man is flanked by `non-existence' on both sides. First he was non-existent, then became existent, then again he dies.

Ordinarily, it would have been quite enough to order the child to obey his parents so long as they are alive, and make him free of all obligations as soon as they depart from this world. But it would not have been in keeping with the 'metaphorical lordship' of parents. Islam ordained that as the Lordship of Allah does not come to end; likewise, the lordship of the parents is not effected by their death. It continues so long as the child is alive.

al-Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a. s.) said:

> Verily, a servant of Allah remains good to his parents when they are alive; then they die and he neither repays their loan nor asks pardon (of Allah) for them. At that, Allah writes him as a disobedient child. And, verily, he remains disobedient to them during their life-time, not being good to them, but when

they die, he repays their loan and asks pardon (of Allah) for them. Then Allah writes him as an `obedient and good' child.

A man from Banu Salamah asked the Holy Prophet, "After the death of my parents, is there any right of theirs, still remaining which I should perform (by which I should do good to them)?" The Holy Prophet said: "Yes, praying for them, asking pardon of Allah for them, fulfiling their promise and respecting their friends."

Third Similarity: The above *hadith* shows one more similarity. To respect the chosen servants of Allah (like Prophet and Imams) is an important part of the rights of Allah. Likewise, to respect the friends of one's parents is among the compulsory rights of the parents.

17. SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER'S RIGHTS

Uptil now, I have explained the joint rights of both parents on the children. But we know that during pregnancy and rearing children, the mother gladly suffers such turmoils which paternal love can never endure. Islam is the natural religion; it has nowhere ignored the natural urges. It is for

this reason that many *ayat* specially refer to the troubles endured by mothers.

. . . حملته امّه وهنا على وهن و فصاله فى عامين . . .

(لقمان ، ٣١ : ١۴)

. . . in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in two years was his weaning . . . (Qur'an, 31 :14)

و وصّينا الإنسان بوالديه إحسانا حملته امّه كرها و وضعته كرها و حمله و فصاله ثلثون شهرا . . .

(الاحقاف ، ۴۶ : ١۵)

We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents. In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the child to his weaning is thirty month (Qur'an, 46:15)

Hakim ibn Hizam asked the Holy Prophet "O' Messenger of Allah, whom should I do good to?" The Holy Prophet said, "Your mother." He asked, "Then who?" The Holy Prophet again

said: "Your mother." He again asked, "Then who?" The Holy Prophet again said, "Your mother." He asked fourth time, "Then who?" Then the Holy Prophet said, "Your father."

It is because of this *hadith* that Muslim scholars say that the right of the mother is three times greater than the right of father. Also, the Holy Prophet has said: "Paradise is under the feet of mothers."

18. A WARNING

Islam has given parents so much right on their children. But it does not mean that the parents have been given licence to ill-treat their children. Tyrant parents are a danger to Muslim society and family.

As a check against such high-handedness, the Holy Prophet has said: "Allah has cursed those parents who (by their behaviour) compel their children to disobey them."

How can this happen?

If the parents themselves do not care about the rights of their children; if they do not give proper religious education; if they neglect their character-building; if they put so much burden

upon them that is beyond their strength; if they behave towards the children tyrannically - then it is they who are compelling the children to revolt against them; and they will become candidates of the above-mentioned curse of Allah.

19. THE QUR'AN AND THE GOSPELS

The Rev. G. Margoliouth has written in the introduction of the translation of *The Koran* by Rev. J. M. Rodwell:

> The shortcomings of the moral teaching contained in the Koran are striking enough if judged from the highest ethical standpoint with which we are acquainted.

Well, we have seen what the Qur'an and the Prophet of the Qur'an teach about the moral and ethical obligations of parents and children. Let us see what light is thrown on this subject in the Gospels

> While he *(Jesus)* yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then

one *(man)* said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, who is my mother? and who are my brethren? *(Mathew, 12:* 46-48).

What a gentle way of talking about one's mother and brethren

Of course, we Muslims know that Prophet `Isa (a.s.) could never talk like this about his mother. But this knowledge comes not from the Gospel, but from the Qur'an itself, where he is quoted as saying:

وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَتِي وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا ﴿

(مريم ، ١٩ : ٣٢)

(Allah) *has made me kind to my mother, and did not make me over-bearing or miserable.* (Qur'an, 19:32)

Now, we may easily judge which book presents the "highest ethical stand-point."

Rev. J. M. Rodwell has translated the 40th *ayah of* 4th *surah* like this

> *Worship God, and join not aught with Him in worship. Be good to parents . . .*

And under this *ayah,* he has written the following foot-note.

> An undutiful child is very seldom heard of among the Egyptians, or the Arabs in general. Sons scarcely ever sit, or eat, or smoke, in the presence of the father unless bidden to do so; and they often wait upon him and upon his guests at meals and on other occasions; they do not cease to act thus when they have become men. *(Lane's Mod.* Egypt, vol.i, p.69.

This foot-note under this *ayah is* an acknowledgement that this respect and honour of the parent in the Muslim societies is the direct result of the teaching of the Qur'an.

* * * * *

Part Three

MARITAL AFFAIRS

20. MUTUAL RIGHTS OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

. . . هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ . . .

(البقرة ، ٢ : ١٨٧)

. . . *They* (wives) *are your garment and you are their garment . . .* (Qur'an, 2:187)

While the "family" is the foundation of civilization and society, the relationship of husband and wife and defining their mutual rights and duties is the foundation of family-life. This is a very difficult problem; human beings have been trying to unravel this knotty problem since the the beginning of humanity - and the result is a

never-ending conflict of theories and a mass of irreconcilable views and opinions; and this confusing state of affairs seems to worsen day by day. In various places and at various times, the mutual duties of husband and wife have been going up and down in cycles like a merry-go-round.

Space does not allow us to give here any detail; but history has clear evidence to show that whenever the sphere of activities of women was enlarged the only result was unmitigated disaster and a decayed society.

Every so-called liberty brought a reaction of horrifying suppression; and every unchecked excess resulted in suffocating restrictions. Maintaining a balance between extremes is the law of nature and nature does not hesitate in severely punishing those who break its laws.

Even now there is a war of ideas, a conflict of ideals, going on in this subject between East and West - or, more correctly, between Islam and the non-Islamic world. The real cause of the conflict is that the anti-Islam forces are either unwilling or unable to decide what are the "Natural" spheres of activities for man and woman, and what are the aims and objects of a married life. If these two points are clearly defined, then there is no danger of anyone going astray.

21. NATURAL SPHERES OF ACTIVITIES OF MAN AND WOMAN

It is clear that, so far as the safety and development of the human race is concerned, every human being has two important functions to perform : (1) Pro-creation, i. e., maintaining the population of human beings so that human race is not faced with extinction; (2) To obtain the necessities of life by participating in the struggle of economy.

On the other hand, we see that the Creator has divided the humanity into two distinct groups: Male and Female. And, it is clear that, physically and biologically man is equipped far better to deal with the hustle and bustle of the struggle to earn livelihood, while woman is prevented from it by her many physical differences. On the other hand, the body of a woman is geared to pro-creation and child-rearing.

it requires no great philosophical mind to realize that the nature has endowed each group with the ability to efficiently perform only one of the two functions: the man, by nature, is unable to bear and rear a child; likewise, the woman is not meant to bear the back-breaking burden of earning her livelihood or to plunge into the conflicts of society.

22. BENEFITS OF MARRIAGE

The above discussion brings us to the benefits of marriage and the philosophy of the matrimonial bond.

Marriage is one of the fundamental sociological institutions. Mankind, since its very beginning, has kept to it without any disruption. Even the so called `uncivilized' tribes and primitive societies treat marriage as a sacred bond. Such an institution must be based on the foundation of the nature itself.

Philosophy of Marriage: Islam has based its matrimonial laws on the correlation between masculinity and femininity. Obviously this comple mentary system in man and woman - and it is the most intricate and inter-related one, permeating their whole beings - was not created in vain or without purpose. The male by his nature is attracted to the female, and vice versa. And this system has only one goal in sight: Procreation. Islamic marriage is based on this reality, and all its matrimonial rules revolve around this axis. On this foundation are based the Islamic laws concerning chastity and conjugal rights, exclusive attachment of the wife to her husband and the rules.of divorce and *`iddah* (the waiting-period after a woman has

been widowed or divorced before she can re-marry), legitimacy and parentage, custody of children and their upbringing, inheritance and other related matters.

In short, marriage is the only legal and honourable way of satisfying sexual desire, and the husband and wife by their union ensure the sur vival of mankind. Although almost all the burden in this task falls on the woman, the initial steps cannot be taken without the participation of the man.

This is the philosophy of marriage. And it also shows the first and primary benefit of matrimony.

The Holy Prophet said:

> Marry and procreate and increase your population . . .

Second Benefit of Marriage: The second benefit is that the husband and the wife jointly (but with division or responsibilities) perform the tasks which they are faced with in establishing a family. And each finds his or her fulfilment in the other. As explained earlier, woman is not fit to earn livelihood; man is not fit to manage domestic affairs. Marriage binds them to make up each other's deficiencies, so that the family may prosper.

The man will spend his energies in earning a livelihood for himself and his family. The woman will manage the domestic life with that income. Allah has reminded us of this very point in these words

وَأَنكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ
إِن يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ
عَلِيمٌ * (النّور ، ٢٤ : ٣٢)

And marry those among you who are single, and the virtuous ones among your slaves, male and female: if they be in poverty, Allah will make them rich by His Grace; for Allah is abundantly-giving, All-knowing. (Qur'an, *24:32)*

It is for this reason that al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "The sustenance is with women and dependants." Domestic science is the natural preserve of women, and by their efficient management they can make the money stretch far.

Modern non-Islamic societies have laid the foundation of matrimony on only this cooperation between husband and wife, while in Islam it is a

secondary, not the primary, benefit. Marriage, according to present day societies, is a co-operative venture, albeit much narrower in scope than other such institutions, like a municipality or a club.

It is for this reason that modern laws do not pay any attention to the rules of chastity etc. This inadequate foundation - cooperation in life - has given rise to a vast multitude of social problems and has created chaos in domestic life, because it is not in complete harmony with realities of creation and nature. Man is a social animal, no doubt. Everyone cooperates with everyone else, dividing the labour and work according to one's aptitude. But this factor requires cooperation between any two persons; it does not specifically call for cooperation between a man and a woman. Therefore, it is a weak foundation on which to build the edifice of matrimony. If marriage were only a co-operative institution, there would be no need of any special rule for matrimony; the general rules governing associations and co-operative societies would be enough. It would negate the virtues of chastity and fidelity, nullify the concept of legitimacy and affinity, and abrogate the rules of inheritance - as some "advanced" societies have done. If we accept this ultimate result of the modern philosophy of marriage, we will have to

accept that all this complicated and inter-related system in the bodies of man and woman was created without any purpose.

Now to return to our original topic. The basic philosophy and secondary benefit of marriage have already been described. It was because of those benefits that the Holy Prophet said: "The worst of your dead is the unmarried one."

Now, we may understand the meaning of the *ayah:*

> *They* (wives) *are your garment and you are their garment.*

The garment serves three purposes: it beautifies, it covers the parts of the body, and it protects from cold and heat. Allah says

يَا بَنِيٓ اٰدَمَ قَدْ اَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُوَارِي سَوْءٰاتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوٰى ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ . . .

(الاعراف ، ٧ : ٢٦)

0' Children of Adam! We have bestowed upon you garment to cover your shame,

and to be an adornment to you. And the garment of righteousness, that is the best . . . (Qur'an, 7:26)

Husband and wife, by uniting together, cover the natural shortcomings of each other, and this union protects them from hardships and difficulties which one faces by living alone; the sun of happiness and prosperity shines on the horizon of life; and both, by their joint efforts, discharge all the duties laid upon them by human nature.

23. ISLAMIC BOUNDARY LINE

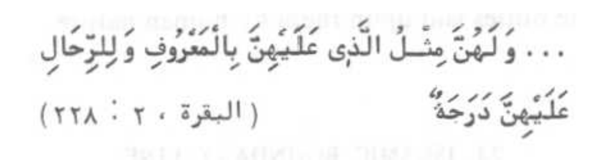
Uptil now we have been looking at the natural boundary line between the responsibilities of man and woman. Now, let us see how Islam - the Natural Religion - has safe-guarded that boundary.

It was mentioned earlier that Islam wants to educate boys in such a way that they develop into Men of Action; and to educate girls to make them into the Rulers of the Home.

Nature demands that all individuals should have equal rights. But it does not mean that every

individual should be entrusted with every responsibility and every duty. A weak person is not expected to perform the tasks done by a strong one. If we treat both equally, it.will be harmful to both.

What is then the meaning of this equality? It means that everyone should be given his or her right without let or hindrance, and be put in his or her rightful place. The words of Allah point to it



> . . . *and they* (women) *have rights similar to the rights against them, accroding to what is equitable; but men have a degree* (of advantage) *over them; . . .* (Qur'an, 2:228)

This verse ordains equality between the rights of both groups at the same time when it shows the differences between the both.

Men and women equally share the Divine gifts of thinking and will, which in their turn create free choice. She should, therefore, be free in her

thinking and will, and should have freedom to choose her own course of action. In other words, she should be free to look after her life's affairs - personal as well as social - except where there is a genuine reason to the contrary. Islam gave her this freedom in full measure. She may act independently in all matters in which a man is free to act. She gets her share in inheritance, she is the rightful owner of whatever she may earn, she may deal with others in all types of dealings, like trade, partnership and gift, she may acquire knowledge and impart it to others, she may stake a claim, defend her rights, sue and be sued without any need of seeking permisssion of her husband. These few examples will show how she was given an independent personality, unfettered in her will or action by men or their guardianship. She thus got, by the Grace of Allah, what the world had denied her since the beginning of humanity, and which was unheard of before the advent of Islam.

But while sharing these basic qualities with men, she differs from them in other ways. As a result of those differences, her body is compara tively soft and elegant; and finer sentiments, like love, tender -heartedness and inclination towards beauty and adornment, are more pronounced in her than in man. On the other hand, the power

of cool reasoning is more prominent in men than in women. In short, a woman lives a sentimental life; a man in comparison does not allow sentiments to cloud his judgement.

It was for this reason that Islam differentiated between the duties and responsibilities of both groups. The tasks demanding cool reasoning, like rulership and judgeship have been reserved for men; also the fighting side of *jihad* (holy war against the infidels) is man's preserve, although women may attend the *jihad* for nursing and treating the wounded soldiers. The woman has been entrusted with bringing up of children and looking after the domestic management. Man has been given responsibility of her maintenance, for which he is compensated by a double share in inheritance.

Thus, Islam was the first to release woman from her bondage by giving her freedom of will and action. All the slogans of emancipation of women, raised in modern times, are but an echo of the clarion call of Islam. Non-Islamic societies in this matters are just following the lead given by Islam. But the trouble is that they are not content with following; they want to improve upon the master-piece of Islam - forgetting that the principle laid down by Islam is a perfectly circular ring; nothing can be added to or substracted from

it without disturbing the whole alignment. Yet, in spite of their keen desire to emancipate woman, these societies have not succeeded in this endeavour. Woman is still far behind in all those fields of activities which Islam has reserved for man. The data show that the fields of rulership, judgeship and military services (in the meaning of fighting) are still a "man's world".

The following *hadith* (tradition) may give a general outline of the above-mentioned Islamic principle

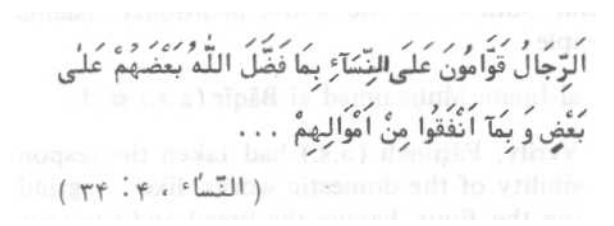
> al-Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) said:
>
> Verily, Fatimah (a.s.) had taken the responsibility of the domestic works, like ... grinding the flour, baking the bread and sweeping the house; and `Ali (a.s.) had taken the responsibility of all works outside the door of the house, like bringing the fire-wood, and obtaining food stuff, etc. *(Bihar al-anwar,* Vol.10)

According to this *hadith* the boundary between the responsibility of man and woman is the wall of the house. Woman is Supreme in whatever happens within four walls and man is Supreme in all matters outside those walls.

Islam has liberated the woman from the turmoils and troubles of outside world; so that she may concentrate on the burdensome duties of domestic affairs.

Now, we come to the mutual rights and duties of husband and wife.

24. THE RIGHTS OF THE HUSBAND



الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَآءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللّٰهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ وَ بِمَآ اَنْفَقُوا مِنْ اَمْوَالِهِمْ . . .

(النّسآء ، ۴ : ۳۴)

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) *than the other, and because they (i.e.,* men) *support them* (women) *from their means. . .* (Qur'an, 4:34)

This *ayah* covers in a nut-shell all the principles of domestic life. As mentioned earlier woman is, by nature, the weaker sex. As such she should not be expected to struggle for a livelihood; instead man should provide for both. If `home' is

a kingdom, then husband is the King, and wife his Prime Minister. This *ayah* points to these facts. Let us look minutely at these phrases

'*Allah has given the one more than the other.":* This phrase refers to the natural strength of man in comparison to woman.

Man and Woman: Physical Differences

It has been mentioned earlier that there are certain important anatomical and physical differences betweeen man and woman, which equip them for different roles in procreation. To these major differences can be added other secondary ones involving skeletal and muscular variations.

Reference to any physiology book will show that the regulation for the maintenance of these differences is largely a chemical one: the harmones (the name given to the chemicals which animals and human beings produce to regulate procreative and other functions) produce physical and functional differences. It can also be shown scientifically that these harmones produce distinct emotional effects and they are agents which cause emotional changes such as those seen in women before and after child-birth.

It should be mentioned here that it is the harmones which produce the marked general difference between man and woman, described earlier, which make the latter more suited to the task of rearing young children, and the former better able to withstand the rigours of competitive existence.

Farid Wajdi Afandi quotes an authority to the effect that the psychology of a woman is nearer to that of a child. A child will start crying if confronted with an unpleasant situation; and will start jumping and merry-making when happy. Just the same is the case with woman who, in comparison to man, is more affected by such feeling.

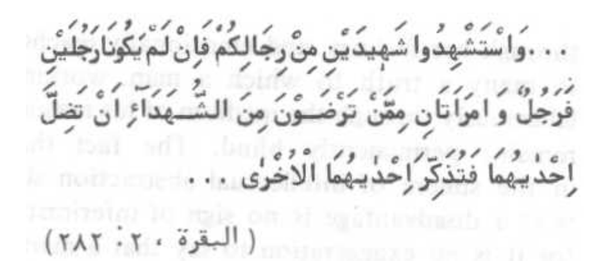
Allah has made woman more sensitive than man because it is more in keeping with the role for which she has been created, i.e., Motherhood.

Pointing to this fact Kenneth Walker writes in *The Physiology of Sex* (published by Penguin Books)

> In order that she may succeed in the world to which she rightly belongs, woman has been equipped with a greater sensitiveness to effective stimulus than has a man. She sees life

through her feelings, and emotionally reaches to many a truth to which a man, working laboriously through the medium of his reason, remains permanently blind. The fact that in the sphere of intellectual abstraction she is at a disadvantage is no sign of inferiority, for it is no exaggeration to say that a man's judgement is as often warped as it is helped by this intellect. `A woman judge,' it has been said, `Would always deliver her sentences in accordance with the dictates of her heart.' But, as Maranon has asked, `What better method could there be of judging the action of others than reason tempered with feeling?' It is therefore no deprecation of a woman to state that she is more sensitive in her emotions and less ruled by her intellect. We are merely stating a difference, a difference which equips her for the special part for which she is cast.

Perhaps because of this difference in perception, and the dominance of feeling over intellect, the Qur'an treats evidence of two women as equal to that of one man



. . . And get two witnesses from your own men; and if there are not two men, then a man and two women such as you choose for witness, so that if one of them errs the other can remind her . . . (Qur'an, 2:282)

Anyhow, it was because of this natural weakness of the "Fair Sex" that man has been made responsible to provide for her necessities. Justice and mercy demand that her back should not be broken by putting a heavy load upon her.

"Because they (men) *support them* (woman) *from their means "* makes this point clear.

It is painful to see that the non-Islamic societies have compelled the weaker sex to carry a double load of responsibilities on her shoulders, disguising this "tyranny" as "emancipation of women" and "equality of sexes."

And what does this "emancipation" mean?

Woman is still required to carry on her natural responsibilities of child-bearing and child-rearing. Man does not, and by nature cannot, share with her the burden of pregnancy, nursing and suckling the infant, looking after the children and all multifarious activities connected with "motherhood." Woman has to bear this burden alone. But, in addition to these full-time life-consuming responsibilities, man now tells her to help him in the struggle of earning their livelihood! Thus, the stronger sex has "liberated" the weaker sex to share his burden without himself sharing her burden. Poor woman, she is still overwhelmed by the powerful slogans of "liberation" and "emancipation" without realizing that it is nothing but a clever device of man to overload her with his own duties. The disaster - social, domestic and economic - wreaked by the entry of woman in earning fields are too numerous to be listed here.

25. A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN THE HOME

However, man has been made guardian of woman, because of his strong physical and intellectual powers and because he is responsible for maintaining her. It is for this reason that the wife is obliged to obey her husband.

The Holy Prophet has said

> The most honoured women before Allah are those who are obedient to their husbands and remain within the boundaries of their homes.

If the women remain within their natural boundry and, by obeying the husband, fulfil the duties imposed upon them by the Creator, they would discharge their responsibilities, and surely would deserve to be called, "The most honoured women."

I know the exponents of the equality of sexes will oppose this straight-forward principle. But in the domestic affairs as in all societies an authori tative leader is a MUST. No association or institution can function without a leader; even sports clubs need a President and a Secretary. Is it not strange that it is only the domestic institution,

the hub of all success and prosperity, which is considered so unimportant as not to need any authority?

It has been explained above that a man has a natural ability to become that leader, while a woman requires a man to bring out her natural abilities. In the words of the poet Igbal:

> *The virtue of man shines out without any outside help; but the virtue of woman is dependent on an `other' (i.e.,* man) *to bring it out.*

Anthropologists tell us that the first stage of womanhood was when the "family" was not an established institution. Woman, in that period, was free from all bonds, and was absolutely her own master. But, in that very stage, she was absolutely without any honour and had no respect.

When the "family" was established, the sitution began to change. Coming within the circle of family the woman lost her freedom and was obliged to submit to many restrictions. But, at the same moment, she acquired a high prestige and honour which was undreamt of before.

An interesting question has been asked by an author on this very subject. He asks that if the

advance of civilization and human perfection only means that woman attains complete freedom and is not obliged to obey her husband, then, why is it that primitive tribes are not acknowledged as the guardians of highest civilization in the world, as males in those tribes are content to sit idle and it is the woman who is "free" to do all the jobs.

The "emancipation" has compelled many a woman in western countries to shun marriage. In words of a western social worker, these women abhor the fundamental factor of the civilization, that is `matrimony '. They have completely lost the urge and feelings which are naturally found in the women of their age-group. Now they are neither man nor woman; they have developed into a neutral "sex"! They are not `man' because they differ from man anatomically, and they are not "woman" because their activities and feelings are opposite to that of a woman.

A person cannot embark in two boats at the same time. If a woman is devoting her time in earning her livelihood, she is depriving her children of their natural rights of "maternal love and care".

In 1971, the *Sunday News* (Dar-es-Salaam) carried an article under the heading IT IS HARD ON THE MOTHER. The following paragraphs give a fair picture of this deep-rooted problem

"Take the example of a mother working in an office. Her first worry before she takes up her appointment is about her children.

"She must make sure that she has hired a suitable nursemaid for the children, which is often a dream because these are becoming unbearably expensive. But someone warm-hearted and generous, with a lot of love to give in mothering the children in her absence: that is the kind of maid servant she wants.

"A mother observes that parental love for a child is actually irreplaceable and is vital to its development. A child has to grow with it.

"But, as we have seen, who will pay for the nursemaid or the baby-sitter? The question is difficult enough for a working married mother."

Again he writes

"But their main concern is their children. As they have to give time to their job, they have to do the same to their children.

"For example, a woman teacher is a mother of two children. Teaching needs many hours of devotion and some extra hours of preparation at home.

"A woman teacher who is also a mother has

to be very careful in planning her time. Home preparation interferes with the time allocated to chatting and playing with her children, since she has been away for the whole day.

"Some children are naughty. They have to be taken care of with tender toughness. And yet there are teaching lessons to be prepared. She literally has to divide herself into two persons!

"The majority of mothers enjoy cooking, so they prefer doing it for themselves even if they have cooks. After office hours, therefore, they pass by the market to do proper grocery, and so to make a meal of their choice - to please sweet teeth of their husbands.

"But the reality of their office or factory jobs means that they are doubling, not to mention that some women do not necessarily love cooking."

Above the article, the following words were printed in bold letters: "Children are becoming a problem for the modern working mother in Africa."

In the end the writer dutifully suggested this interesting cure

"The question we pose here is: Does a Tanzania husband help in the cooking or any other

household chore which in the old days was meant for women?

"If a man and his wife are both career people, the dictates of socialism demand that both of them must work equally in the household. Since this is not the case, what it means is that socialism has not reached home ... where it should have begun in the first place."

But the question is this

If the parental love is irreplaceable then how can a nursemaid provide that love and care?

If the emancipation of women and "socialism" mean that the woman has to do double duty (motherhood and wage-earning) and also the husband has to do double duty (wage-earning and cooking), then is it not far better and less back-breaking to let both of them do their own natural single duty without interfering with the other's responsibilities? This will have the added benefit of reducing the number of juvenile delinquents . . . because children will grow up under kind and understanding mother's love.

We may sum it up with the following words of Kenneth Walker

"Not only in her physical but also in her psychological make up everything in a woman is sacrificed to the function of motherhood. In the same way a man is psychologically, as well as physically, specially equipped for the task of seeking out the woman and protecting her and his family.

"(A woman's) aptitude for physical and intellectual exertion in the primitive struggle for existence is less than that of man. Occasionaly she may possess these more masculine faculties, and by her own exertions succeed in establishing for herself a place in the world, but this is not her natural role. Biologically speaking, the woman who tights her own battles has moved out of the sphere for which nature has equipped her and trespassed into another that does not by right belong to her. The fact that she often succeeds in making good in the new sphere into which she has wandered does not affect this principle. Emotionally and physically she is dedicated to the career of maternity, and it is on the man she was meant to rely not only for her own support, but also for that of her children."

The Urdu poet, Iqbal, has pointed to this fact in these words

If western education means the death of `motherhood' then such an education, in the eyes of thinkers, is DEATH.

This subject has been dealt with at some length in order that readers may fully understand the wisdom and virtue of the restrictions put up on women of Islam. Thanks to these regulations, Muslim women have been enjoying their lives quite peacefully and naturally for the last fourteen centuries. They have remained safe and immune from the degradations to which other women were subjected upto the end of the last century. We are sure that by following the rules of Islam they will remain safe from present day excesses as they saved themselves from the shortcomings of the past.

26. HUSBAND: METAPHORICAL LORD

It was mentioned in Part Two that the parents are the metaphorical Lords ارباب مجازی of the children. There is no exception to this rule, so far as boys are concerned. But as for girls, after marriage the parents' Lordship comes to an end and they come under the domain of the husbands.

A woman once asked the Holy Prophet: "O' Messenger of Allah, whose right is the greatest on man?" The Holy Prophet said: "His parents." Then she asked: "And whose right is the greatest on woman?" He said: "Her husband."

Once some people told the Holy Prophet "We saw some people bow down before some of their people." The Holy Prophet said: "If I were to allow any person to bow down before anyone I would have ordered the woman to bow down before her husband."

al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

> Allah sent a message to the Holy Prophet, "Tell Fatimah (a.s.) not to disobey `Ali (a.s.) because if he was ever displeased (with her) I would be displeased because of his displeasure."

It was because of this that the Holy Prophet said to Fatimah (a.s.):

> O' Fatimah, if a woman worshipped Allah seventy thousand years, but died disobeying her husband (and the husband was not pleased with her), she would be amongst the people of Hell.

27. OBEDIENCE BASED ON LOVE

We must remember that a rule, based on tyranny or injustice, can never be stable. Therefore, the foundation of the husband's authority has been laid not on fear or awe, but on love. Allah says:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا
إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ * (الرّوم ، ٣٠: ٢١)

And among His signs is this that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between you. Verily, in that are signs for those who reflect. (Qur'an, 30:21)

In this *ayah,* two words, `love' and `mercy', have been used for the matrimonial love. It points to the subtle difference between the love of woman and man. Woman, generally speaking, loves her husband more intensely. She gives her soul and body to the husband. The word, "love"

describes this aspect.

On the other hand, husband's love to his wife is tinted with the natural superiority - there is no "giving up his self" to the wife. Hence the word "mercy".

Anyhow, this love and obedience are the prelude to fulfil the two important duties mentioned earlier: Management of domestic affairs, and procreation.

28. DOMESTIC MANAGEMENT

First of all, it is essential that the wife should consider the earnings of her husband (however little or great that may be) better than the whole world.

Then she should try to keep the expenses of the household within that limit. The Holy Prophet said:

> There is no woman who is happy with the sustenance which Allah has given to her husband and does not demand from him more than his strength, but that Allah will give her seventy thousand clothes in Paradise.

For those who contravene this ethic, the Holy Prophet said:

> There is no woman who demands from her husband beyond his strength, and is not content with his livelihood - be it little or great - and is not satisfied with the sustenance given her by Allah, and who will be among those whose good deeds are not accepted, but her sins not pardoned, and with whom Allah will remain displeased except that she repents.

It is a fact that many domestic chores very much try the patience. It is for this reason that the Law-giver of Islam has promised eternal bless ings in reward of such drudgery. The Holy Prophet said:

> If, while cooking her food, tears come out from the eyes of the woman because of smoke, Allah will write for her the reward of those warriors (in the way of Allah) whose eyes shed tears from the fear of Allah.

If she has got someone to help her in domestic duties, and, thus, gets some free time, she

should not waste that time; instead, that precious time should be spent in useful activities within the boundary of her home. "The best activity of women is spinning; because for every thread she is forgiven one sin and awarded one good deed."

Her attention has been drawn towards good house-keeping in the following words: "Whosoever woman, in the house of her husband, transfers a thing from one place to another, for a good purpose, Allah looks at her (with mercy), and whosoever Allah looks at with mercy, would never be punished."

29. PROCREATION

The progress of mankind, nay, its very existence depends upon this important function; and almost all of its responsibilities are with the woman.

When a woman is blessed with it, she is in fact discharging her duties towards humanity.

Islam has not overlooked the ever-present travail and pain incurred in this important function. It has promised her great reward and unlimited blessings in recompense for this difficult task. The woman has to pass through four stages

in this connection: (1) Conception; (2) Delivery; (3) Suckling; and (4) Good rearing of the children.

According to the Holy Prophet, she gets eternal rewards in all these stages:-

First stage: When a woman conceives, she (during her pregnancy) is likened to one who is (continuously) fasting, praying, and doing *jihad* by one's soul and wealth in the way of Allah.

Second stage: When she delivers, she gets so much reward that it cannot even be imagined because of its greatness!

Third stage: When she feeds her infant, she gets the reward of emancipating a slave (from the children of Prophet Isma'il-a.s.) at every suckling.

Fourth stage: Rearing the children - It has already been described in the rights of children.

The following extracts from a *hadith* must be read carefully: The Holy Prophet said to her daughter Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.):

O' Fatimah, it is incumbent upon woman that she should not bring before her husband, what he does not like; should guard herself as his trust; should be sincere to him in his presence as well as in absence; should cut (the injury of) her tongue (from him) ; should look after him when he needs looking after; should fulfil his requirements and should look after his condition; because her looking towards her husband is an act of worship; and she should not invite anyone to his food except with his permission; and she should remain content with the sustenance given her by Allah; and she should not leave her husband, and if she left him, then neither her prayer, fast nor alms will be accepted (by Allah) until her husband forgives her.

30. THE RIGHTS OF THE WIFE

. . . وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِى عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ
عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ وَاللهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ *(البقرة ، ٢ : ٢٢٨)

. . . *and they* (women) *have rights similar to the rights against them, accroding to what is*

> *equitable, but men have a degree* (of advantage) *over them, and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.* (Qur'an, 2:228)

This *ayah* explodes the myth of so-called "slavery of Muslim woman" which is the target of the attacks of many an ignorant western orien talist. It was essential, for the purpose of domestic well-being, to install the man with effective authority over women. *"Men have a degree* (of advantage) *over them"* points to this fact. Apart from this, both sides have been accorded well-balanced rights. Each "half" has been given all the necessary rights without any reservation.

As mentioned earlier, according to reason and according to the Islamic *shari`ah,* the husband is solely responsible for the livelihood of the wife, and in view of this responsibility he has been given an authority which in its turn is based upon love.

It appears from above that all that a woman needs for her peace of mind, spiritual well-being, and material comfort, can be classified under two headings: (1) Sincere love; and (2) Fair maintenance.

If one looks at the long list of the demands of advocates of Liberation of Women, one will find that all those rights which are in conformity

with reason are within the circle of these two rights.

Islam has emphatically ordered husbands to let their wives enjoy their rights without any hindrance. The Holy Prophet said:

> Any woman who makes her husband suffer with her tongue ... will be the first to enter Hell; and, likewise, the man if he treats her unjustly.

31. LOVE AND GOOD GRACE

al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

> I am sure the more a man becomes good in this thing (i.e., Faith and Islam), the more his love to (his) women increases.

The *ayah: "And He has put Love and Mercy between you"* shows that matrimonial love is the Grace of Allah; and the stronger the faith in Allah, the greater this grace of Allah upon the couple.

It is for this reason, that al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq said:

In the character of the prophets is the love of women.

The Holy Prophet accordingly, said

Let it be known that the best of you is the one who is best for his women. And I am the best for my women.

Likewise, he said:

Allah may have mercy on His servant who does good between himself and his wife; because, verily, Allah has given him authority upon her and has made him her protector.

According to the Islamic *shari `ah,* it is highly emphasized that a man should enter his home with smiling face. The home may become paradise if this rule is followed consciously,

In the section 25 it was mentioned that the "most honoured woman" is the one who is obedient to her husband. The above-mentioned *ahadith* show that the "best man" is the one who treats his wife gently and with good grace. In other words, these *ahadith fully* explain the *ayah*.

And women have rights similar to the rights upon them. (Qur'an, 2:228)

32. RIGHT OF MAINTENANCE

In many *ayat* in the Qur'an, Allah has exhorted man to treat his wife gently. Apart from the above-mentioned *ayat*, another *ayah* says:

. . . وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ . . . (النّساء ، ۴ : ۱۹)

. . . *And live with them* (women) *with kindness and equity . . .* (Qur'an, 4:19)

"Good treatment" according to the *ahadith* means that the wife should be provided, as far as possible, the same standard of living which she had in the house of her parents; so that she does not face material discomfort and mental depression.

But if the husband, because of his limited resources, is unable to provide that standard, he is not to be blamed.

. . . عَلَى الْمُوسِعِ قَدَرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ قَدَرُهُ . . .

(البقرة ، ۲ : ۲۳۶)

. . . *On the wealthy according to his means; and on the poor according to his means . . .* (Qur'an, 2:236)

al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

The dependants of a man are his prisoners. And the most beloved servant in presence of Allah is the one who is the best in treating his prisoners.

Likewise, al-Imam Musa al-Kazim (a. s.) said:

The dependants of a man are his prisoners. So, if Allah bestows someone with His blessings, he should increase the expenses on his prisoners; and if he did not do so, then that blessing is likely to perish.

According to the *shari `ah,* maintenance of the wife is in exchange for her obedience. If she does not deny the husband his conjugal rights, she is entitled to her meaintenance. If the husband, because of his financial difficulties, defaults in its provision, he remains indebted to that amount; and must repay soon after getting money etc. In short, the maintenance of the wife is based on a

"give and take" basis, and man has to pay it any-how. al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Cursed is the man who neglects his dependants."

33. FOREBEARANCE

As was mentioned earlier, women's feelings dominate their intellect. If a girl is not brought up properly according to Islamic ethics, she is apt to become hot-tempered and sharp-tongued.

On the other hand, a man is not so dominated by emotions. Therefore, Islam has enjoined man to have patience and forebearance in the face of woman's temper. A man must be tolerant to his wife, keeping in view her natural weakness and remembering that she by nature is governed by emotions.

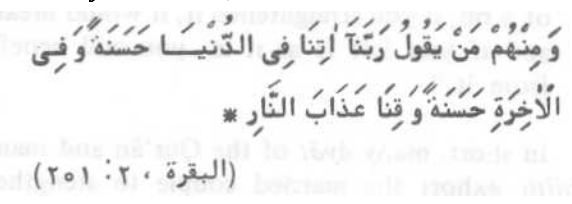
Allah says

. . . وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا *

(النّسَاء ، ٤ : ١٩)

> . . . *And live with them* (women) *on a footing of kindness and equity; and even if ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a thing and Allah created in it a great deal of good.* (Qur'an, 4:19)

There is no denying that it is a very tough assignment and sometimes needs a lot of patience. Allah says in the Qur'an


وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَآ آتِنَا فِى الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِى الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ *

(البقرة ، ٢ : ٢٠١)

> *And there are men who say: "Our Lord! give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and protect us from the torment of the Fire."* (Qur'an, 2: 201)

Among several explanations of this *ayah,* Amir al-mu'minin, `Ali (a. s.) said:

> Good in this world means a good-natured wife, good in the Hereafter means *`huru'l-'in',* and `torment of the Fire' means a `bad natured wife.' *(Tafsir Safi)*

To say that a bad-natured, hot-tempered wife is the torment of the Fire presents the reality in the best possible way. But we should always keep these *ahadith* (traditions) in view:

> Verily, Ibrahim (a.s.) complained to Allah against the temper of (his wife) Sarah. Then, Allah sent a message to him telling him that "Verily, the likeness of woman is likeness of a rib; if you straightened it, it would break; and if you left it as it is you will benefit from it."

In short, many *ayat* of the Qur'an and many *ahadith* exhort the married couple to stengthen the bond of mutual love and effection as long as they are linked together in matrimonial bond, even if it means self-denial and extraordinary patience. And it is by following this principle that human beings may enjoy the peace in this world and happiness in the life hereafter.

34. MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND CONFLICTS

Islam is aware that philosophical theories alone do not pave the road to a better life. It is

the practical laws and codes which bring the peace in a household. Ethical sermons can be of no benefit to common man if they are not firmly based on common-sense and are not within his easy grasp.

The ideal of Islamic marriage is one in which both parties have mutual love and respect and each consciously honours the rights of the other.

But this world is not made of only pious and understanding people. There are many hard-hearted men and women in this world; they do not care for the damage done to Islamic society by their misbehaviour and their flaunting the ideals of the Islamic *shari `ah.* Therefore, it was necessary to frame some rules to correct their behaviour.

Why Conflicts?

The main cause of the conflict is the negligence of one's duties towards the other.

This negligence can be either from the husband's side, or from the wife's side, or from both sides.

Islam has laid down clear rules for each of these situations.

When Wife is at fault

If the wife neglects her duties and gives trouble to the husband, then, three cures have been prescribed step by step. Allah says in the Qur'an

. . . وَالّٰتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ
فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ
سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلِيًّا كَبِيرًا ﴿ (النّساء ، ۴ : ۳۴)

. . . *And as to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them, and* (then) *refuse to share their beds, and* (lastly) *beat them. Then, if they return to obedience seek not against them means* (of annoyance); *for Allah is Most High Great.* (Qur'an, 4:34)

First Step: First the husband should admonish the wife and advise her to change her behaviour. In the beginning, advice and mutual discussion may bear good fruits, while tough measure may create an undesirable reaction.

Second Step: If this fails, then it means that the malady has taken a deeper root. Therefore, the husband should leave her in her bed. This silent protest may bring the wife to her senses; and the cause of conflict may be removed.

Third Step: But, if her arrogance has reached the furthest limit, and she is oblivious of admonition and that subtle protest, then the `soft' treat ment will not be of any use. In this extremity, the husband is allowed to beat her. If good-manners fail to awake her gentle feelings, the alternative is `tough' dealing.

But that `tough' dealing also must be tempered with tenderness. al-Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) said: "Verily, it is a stroke with a tooth stick." The *shar`ah* says that the blow should not be such as to break a bone or to leave red marks or bruises, nor is he allowed to hit her on her face, nor in another place several times.

If these cures remove the cause of complaint, the husband should at once start gentle and fair dealing with her. The last sentence of the above mentioned *ayah* points to this aspect: *"Then, if they return to obedience, seek not against them means* (of annoyance)."

When Husband is at fault

If, on the other hand, the husband is at fault and neglects his duties towards his wife, then she, at first, should try to bring a reconcilement with him.

وَإِنِ امْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا

جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ . . .

(النّسآء ، ۴ : ۱۲۸)

And if a wife fears cruelty or negligence on her husband's part, there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable reconcilement between themselves; and the reconcilement is best . . . (Qur'an, 4:128)

If this method fails, then she has a right to put the matter before Hakim ash-Shar`i (the *Qadi* or *mujtahid)* who has every authority to settle the dispute according to his discretion.

When both are at fault

If both neglect their duties towards each other, then there is a need of some helping hands

to end the conflict. Therefore, Allah has ordained:

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا
مِنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقِ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا إِنَّ
اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا خَبِيرًا ﴿ (النساء ٤ : ٣٥)

And if ye fear a breach between the two, then appoint two arbiters, one from his family and the other from hers; if they wish for reconcilement and peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation , for Allah is Omniscient All-knowing. (Qur'an, 4:35)

This arbitration may be resorted to even in the first two situations when only one party is at fault.

35. SEPARATION

Some discords become very complicated and defy all solutions, and family-life becomes extremely intolerable. In such cases, only two alternatives remain

1. to leave the couple in the same condition, which in the words of the Qur'an is: *"The torment of the Fire;"*

2. to release them from the bond of marriage, so that each can find another suitable life-partner.

Common sense prefers the second alternative; and Islam has adopted the same.

Christianity prefers the first alternative, i. e., to compel the couple to remain as man and wife even if they intensely hate each other. It is based upon the following alleged words of Christ

> It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement. But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery: (Mathew, 5:31 -32).

Let human nature decide whether it is only the fornication which pollutes the matrimonial atmosphere ? Does not hot temper or flaunting each other's rights create equally intense discord?

Is not negligence in maintenance, disloyalty, desertion, or disobedience enough to turn the home into a Hell?

It is necessary here to emphasize in so many words the wisdom of divorce in many cases, as allowed by Islam. Suffice it to say that now even the followers of those religions which do not allow divorce are resorting to parliaments to establish "divorce" in their countries' legal systems, sometimes in face of fierce opposition from their churches and religions.

The Hindu religion does not recognize divorce; Hindus a few years ago made divorce a part of their legal system through the "Hindu Code Bill".

The Anglican church is opposed to divorce; Anglicans through an Act of Parliament (of which all the Bishops are members) have allowed them selves to be divorced by the courts. And here is an interesting side-light. The sovereign is the Head of the Anglican church; and as such is supposed to uphold the theory of illegality of divorce.

And the same sovereign, in his/her capacity of Head of State, signs the Acts of Parliament legalizing divorce.

Why could not King Edward VIII marry a divorcee, while at the same time hundreds of thousands of his subjects were getting divorce under his own authority? Does it mean that Christians have two sets of rules: one for great people, another for the common folk?

The Roman Catholic church also is fanatically opposed to divorce. But compelled by the hard facts of life they have found a method to dissolve the marriage, without calling it "divorce". If some-one has the patience of `Job' (Ayyub) and the money of Qarun, he can obtain, after several years' pleading, a decree from the Vatican, declaring that the marriage was null and void from the very beginning.

Ingenious, is not it? The only difficulty is that it can be obtained by wealthy tycoons only. "In recent years, Pope Paul VI has streamlined the cumbersome process . . . that could drag a case out for as long as twenty years. But despite the Vatican's attempts to limit legal fees, costs at the Rota remained high, sometimes running into thousand of dollars and making annulments avail-able mainly to the prosperous." (Time, November 13, 1972)

And if the marriage was not a marriage from the beginning, what is the status of the children of that marriage? Are they also illegitimate?

Italy, under pressure from the Vatican, had resisted the popular demand of legalizing the divorce. Now, there also, an Act has been passed and has become Law.

As soon as the act became law thousands of people applied for divorce, most of whom had been separated from their spouses for twenty or even thirty years.

So much suffering can be caused to humanity by such doctrines. And not only suffering but also encouragement for frustrated people to indulge in sins. Can a couple, separated for twenty or thirty years, remain chaste? Surely, they will find partners to satisfy their natural urges - unlawfully, of course.

36. TALAQ: KHUL`: MUBARAT

As separation is the result of irreconcilable discord, it may be of the same three types which were mentioned in section 34.

1. *Talaq*: This is usually translated as 'divorce'. When the husband is fed up with the misbehaviour of the wife and wants to dissolve the marriage, it is called *"talaq"* in Islamic terminology.

يَآأَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ لِعِدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ . . . (الطّلاق ، ٦٥ : ١)

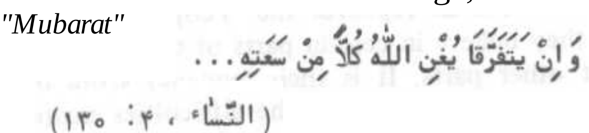
O' Prophet, when ye do divorce women, divorce them at their prescribed periods and count (accurately). . . (Qur'an, 65:1)

2. *Khul`*: If the wife is suffering from the ill-treatment of the husband and wants to get free from him by offering some indemnity, it is called *"khul'"*.

. . . فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ بِهِ . . . (البقرة ، ٢ : ٢٢٩)

. . . *If ye do indeed fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah, then there is no blame on either of them if she gives something for her freedom . . .* (Qur'an, 2;229)

3. *Mubarat :* If both are tired of each other, and want to dissolve the marriage, it is called *"Mubarat"*



And if they disagree (and must part) *Allah will provide abundance for all from His All-reaching bounty . . .* (Qur'an, 4:130)

Thus all three ways of dissolving the marriage are allowed in Islam.

But in all these cases, marriage can be dissolved by the husband's consent only. He has the authority to perform *talaq, khul`* or *mubarat.*

Again, advocates of the "equality of sexes" will frown on this provision. Therefore, it is better to mention that in Western countries where the woman has been given the right to divorce her husband, 80% of the applications of divorce are lodged by wives. And, many is the husband who only comes to know that his wife had divorced him when she is already married to another man.

As has been mentioned earlier, the outlook of woman is dominated by emotion; and if they are given the right to dissolve the marriage, they

are more likely to think of divorce on the slightest of pretexts.

The Qur'an reproves the `People of Book' that they believe in certain parts of the Book and reject other parts. It is their tendency from the very beginning. Faced with the difficulties created by Christian doctrine, they turned towards Islam to borrow a leaf from its *shari `ah,* and adopted the principle of divorce. But the deep-rooted prejudice against Islam prevented them from adopting it with all its necessary details. Divorce was adopted, but details were ignored.

Result?

In California, 2,000 marriages were performed in one year; and within same period 641 divorces were granted. In other words there was one divorce against every three marriages.

This abundance of divorce in Christian societies may also be a reaction to the unreasonable restraint of Christian churches.

37. CONDITIONS OF DIVORCE

Islam allowed in principle dissolution of marriage in all three situations of discord; and thus

satisfied human nature. But, at the same time, it has imposed so many conditions that divorce becomes hard to perform. For example, the husband must be adult and sane, should give divorce by his own free will and intention; it must be done in approved formular, before two men of approved probity; the wife must be free from menses etc., and the couple should not have cohabited after her last menses.

After divorce, a period of three months " `*iddah* " was prescribed; may be the parties feel remorse on separation and are ready to restore the marriage ties again. If so, then the divorce may be revoked and the marriage continues.

Another benefit of this rule is to make sure that the woman is not pregnant from her previous husband.

Divorce: The most disliked permission

Together with these conditions, it has been emphasized that the divorce is very much disliked by Allah and His Prophet.

The Holy Prophet said:

The worst of all permitted things is divorce.

The Holy Prophet also said

> Gabriel advised me about (gentle dealings with) the women, so much so that I thought that she should not be divorced except because of open unchastity.

Here the Holy Prophet is saying the same thing which is attributed to Christ in Mathew. But see the difference in language and then compare the results of these two sayings. *Injil* put unnecessary burden on human nature, and as a result, its followers flauted its ruling and indulged in unbridled lawlessness. Islam allowed divorce, but showed its displeasure with it, relying on human feelings to keep its use to the minimum. The result is that in Islamic society divorce is a rare thing; and a Muslim's domestic life is so secured that non-Muslims cannot imagine it.

* * * * *

Part Four

RELATIVES

38. RIGHTS OF OTHER RELATIVES

. . .وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ الَّذِى تَسَآءَلُونَ بِهٖ وَالْاَرْحَامَ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ۞ (النّسآء ، ۴ : ۱)

. . . *And fear Allah, through Whom you demand your mutual* (rights), *and* (reverence) *the* (relations of) *wombs* (that bore you); *for surely Allah ever watches over you.* (Qur'an, 4:1)

The right of those relatives who are not among the "dependants" is called *"silat ar-rahim"* in Islamic language. Literally it means "to join the womb". As the relatives are joined together through birth, this term practically means "to do good to relatives".

It is here that Islamic ethics and the principle of mutual sympathy and love bring out the beauty of Islam. In the first section we have explained briefly the importance and virtues of this aspect of Islamic ethics. The finer instincts of human nature do demand that relatives behave with mutual sympathy and cooperation, and should deal gently with the another.

Apart from the spiritual benefits, *"silat ar-rahim"* maintains the unity of the family; the confidence that there are people who are always ready to extend their helping hands in time of need, creates peace of mind and contentment of heart.

on the other hand, *"qat` ar-rahim "* (severing the relationship) creates strife and conflict and the unity of the family is shattered. It is common knowledge that disunity in the family always brings in its wake disgrace and misfortune, and opens the door of need and poverty.

The Qur'an and *ahadith* have emphasized these aspects of *"silat ar-rahim ",* as will be seen in the following pages.

39. THE VIRTUES OF '*SILAT AR-RAHIM*' ACCORDING TO QUR'AN AND *HADITH*

We have earlier mentioned this *ayah*

(O' Prophet), *tell them that whatever* (wealth) *ye spend, it is* (primarily) *for the parents and relatives . . .* (Qur'an, 2:215)

Another *ayah* says

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ لَاتَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللّٰهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا . . . (البقرة ، ٢ : ٨٣)

And remember We took a covenant from the Children of Israel that worship none but Allah, and do good to your parents and relatives . . . (Qur'an, 2:83)

These two *ayat show* that doing good to the relatives is next in importance to the obedience of parents. The *ayah* mentioned at the beginning of this section creates the same impression. al-Imam `Ali ibn Musa ar-Rida (a.s.) has commented on that *ayah* in these words

Verily, Allah ordered three things joined with three things . . . and ordered to fear Him joined by *"silat ar-rahim"* - thus one who did not `join his relationship' did not fear Allah.

Another *ayah* says:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَآءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ . . .

(النّحل ، ١٦ : ٩٠)

Verily, Allah commands justice, the doing of good and giving to kith and kin .
(Qur'an, 16:90)

A point to ponder: Helping relatives comes under both "Justice" and "Doing good". Still Allah mentioned it separately; it shows how important this item is in the eyes of Allah.

If anyone wants to find out, in the light of the sayings of the true leaders of Islam, the material benefits of `joining the relationship', the following *ahadith will* guide him

1. al-Imam al-Husayn (a.s.) said:

> One who desires that his life be elongated and his sustenance be increased, should join his relationship.

There are many such *ahadith* from *ma`sumin** *(a.s.):*

2. The Holy Prophet said:

> Verily (it happens that) a man joins his relationship while only three years have remained from his life, so Allah increases his life to thirty-three years; and verily (it happens) that a man severs his relationship and thrity-three years have still remained from his life, and Allah shortens that life to only three years.

al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) has described two incidents showing the truth of this matter; but space does not permit their description here.

3. al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said that the Holy Prophet said

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The Holy Prophet, his daughter Fatimah and the twelve Holy Imams.

> Joining relationship builds homes, increases lives and increases prosperity, even if they be infidels.

4. The Holy Prophet said:

> Some people go on an evil path and commit sins, but they behave gently with their relatives and because of this silat ar-rahim their wealth is increased and their lives elongated. How much reward would have been theirs if they had been good people?

5. It is because of this, that Amir al-mu'minin `Ali (a.s.) said:

> Man is not given reward of any good work sooner than that of silat ar-rahim.

6. So far as its reward in the life Hereafter is concerned, the Holy Prophet has said:

> The reward of charity is ten times; and the reward of lending is eighteen times; and the reward of doing good to a believer is twenty times; and the reward of doing good to a relative is twenty-four times.

7) Prophet Musa (a.s.) asked Allah what was

the reward of *silat ar-rahim*. Allah told him

> O' Musa! I postpone his death (increase his life) ; and make easy for him the death pangs, and the keepers of Paradise will call him to enter it from whichever gate he wants.

The *ahadith* mentioned above tell us of some rewards of *silat ar-rahim* which are given in this life and other which will be given in the life Here after. So far as this world's rewards are concerned, they are given to anyone who practises *silat ar-rahim*, even if he is an unbeliever. These are as *follows*

a) His life is elongated;
b) His sustenance is increased;
c) His home and family prosper;
d) His death pangs are eased.

But the rewards of the life Hereafter depend upon Islam and true faith. They are

a) *silat ar-rahim is* complementary to the fear of Allah and piety. Piety without *silat* ar-rahim is a thing incomplete.

b) All the gates of Paradise will be opened for the believer who practises *silat ar-rahim*.

On the other hand `severing relationship' keeps a man away from all these benefits. It is not possible to give here all the *ahadith* in praise of `joining relationship' nor the , ones condemning `severing relationship'. However, a few *ayat* and *ahadith* concerning `severing relationship' are given below to complete the subject.

40. THE EVILS OF SEVERING RELATIONSHIP

Here are three *ayat:*

الَّذِينَ يَنقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَ يَقْطَعُونَ مَا
أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿ البقرة ، ٢ : ٢٧ ﴾

Those who break. Allah's covenant after it is ratified, and who cut asunder what Allah has ordered to be joined, and do mischief on earth; these cause loss to themselves. (Qur'an, 2:27)

وَ الَّذِينَ يَنقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَ يَقْطَعُونَ
مَآ أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَ يُفْسِدُونَ فِى الْأَرْضِ أُولَٰئِكَ
لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَ لَهُمْ سُوٓءُ الدَّارِ * (الرّعد ، ١٣ : ٢٥)

And those who break the covenant of Allah after having plighted their word thereto, and cut asunder those things which Allah has commanded to be joined, and work mischief in the land, on them is the curse, and for them is the terrible home. (Qur'an, 13:25)

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِى الْأَرْضِ وَ تُقَطِّعُوٓا
أَرْحَامَكُمْ * أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَ أَعْمَىٰٓ
أَبْصَارَهُمْ * (محمّد ، ٤٧ : ٢٢–٢٣)

Then, belike ye are, if ye hold authority, that ye make mischief in the land and break the ties of relationship? Such are the men whom Allah has cursed, for He has made them deaf and blinded their sight. (Qur'an, 47:22 -23)

Now some *ahadith:*

1. Amir al-mu'minin `Ali (a.s.) said in one of his sermons: "I seek protection of Allah from the sins which hasten death." `Abdullah ibn Kawwa said: "O' Amir al-mu'minin, is there any sin which hastens death?" Amir al-mu'minin said: "Yes; and it is severance of relationships. Verily, members of a family remain united and help each other, so Allah gives them sustenance, though they be drinkers of liquor; and, verily, members of a family separate from each other and one of them severs relationship from another, so Allah deprives them (of their sustenance) though they be pious."

2. al-Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) said: "My father told me in his *wasiyyah (will): `O'* my son, do not sit with five persons, do not talk with them, nor accompany them in a path,'

"I said: `May I be your ransom, O' father! who are those five?'

"My father said, `Do not keep the company of one who transgresses Allah's commands, because he will sell you for a morsel or even less than that.'

"I said: `O' father, and what is less than that?' He said. `In expectation of a morsel which he will not get.'

"I said: `And who is the second?'

"He said: `Do not keep the company of a miser, because he will cut you off from his wealth when you will need it most.'

"I said: `And who is the third?'

"He said: `Do not keep the company of a liar, because he is like a mirage, shows you the near thing as distant, and the distant thing as near one.'

"I said: `And who is the fourth?'

"He said: `Do not keep the company of a fool, because he will want to benefit you but will only harm you.'

"I said: `O' father, and who is the fifth?'

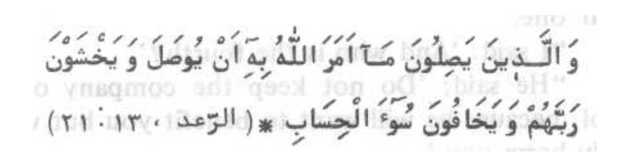
"He said: `Do not keep the company of one who severs relationships, because I have found him cursed in three places in the Book of Allah.' "

(These three places, perhaps, are the same three ayat mentioned in the beginning of this section.)

3. Salimah (the slave-girl of al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq [a.s.]) said: "I was near al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) at the time of his death; presently he became unconscious; when he came to, he said `Give Hasan (Aftas) ibn `Ali ibn `Ali ibn Husayn ibn `Ali ibn Abi Talib seventy dinars, and give this

one so much and that one so much.'

"I said: `You are bequeathing to a man *(Aftas)* who had attacked you with a knife and wanted to kill you?' The Imam said: `Do you not want me to be among those whom Allah has praised for "joining the relationship" and has said for them



Those who join together what Allah has commanded to be joined, and fear their Lord and are afraid of the terrible reckoning. (Qur'an, 13:21) '

"Then he said: `O' Salimah, verily Allah created Paradise and made its scent pleasant and its scent reaches upto the distance of two thousand years; but the person who disobeys the parent or the one who severs relationship will not smell its scent.

Divine Law in Practice:

This bequest of the Imam for his relatives is the practical interpretation of this saying of Allah:

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا
الْوَصِيَّةُ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى
الْمُتَّقِينَ ＊ (البقرة ٢، : ١٨٠)

It is prescribed for you, when death approaches any of you, if he leaves any goods, that he make a bequest to parents and relatives, according to reasonable usage; this is due from the God fearing. (Qur'an, 2:180)

Though this `Law' was abrogated after the enforcement of succession laws, the eternal call of *"this is due from the God fearing" is* exhorting the believers to remember their relatives in their will.

We can find countless people who do good to their relatives; but such example of doing good to a blood-thirsty relative is very rare in the history of mankind; but it is these examples that demonstrate the true spirit of Islamic ethics.

41. CIRCLE OF *SILAT AR-RAHIM*

Which of the relatives are within the circle of silat ar-rahim? Who are the relatives with whom silat ar-rahim is obligatory?

It is very difficult to draw a line to divide near and distant relatives. A person having a broad outlook may widen the circle of his relatives as much as he likes. Distance or nearness in this context depends upon the angle of vision. In other words, we may call it a play of vision. Ten miles is `far' in comparison with five miles, but is very near in comparison with hundred miles.

The following narrative will explain this matter very clearly.

`Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan said: "One day we were with Mu'awiyah; many Quraishites including some of Banu Hashim, were in that group. Mu'awiyah turned towards Banu Hashim and said: `O' Banu Hashim, on what ground do you pride yourselves against us? Are we not (both Banu Hashim and Banu Umayyah) from the same father and mother? And do we not share the same house and birth-place?'

"`Abdullah ibn `Abbas replied: `We pride ourselves against you because of that thing by which

you (Banu Umayyah) boast against the whole tribe of Quraysh, and by which Quraysh boast against the *ansar* (helpers of Medina), and because of which the Arabs boast against all non-Arabs. We pride ourselves against you because of Muhammad (who was from Banu Hashim) and his relationship which you cannot deny and (it is a fact) from which you cannot escape.'

"Mu'awiyah could only say: `O' Ibn `Abbas, you have been given a very sharp tongue.' "

This talk shows that if we look at the fact that the Holy Prophet was from Banu Hashim, then even Banu Umayyah will go out of the circle of relationship; but if we compare that relationship with the distance of *ansar* of Medina, then not only Banu Umayyah but the whole tribe of Quraysh will be counted as the relatives of the Holy Prophet.

What we want to stress is the fact that no mathematician can solve this problem by counting the notches in the family-tree. We have to adopt the system which the *Shari'ah* has prescribed for such matters; and that is "common usage". For this purpose, relatives should be divided into four categories

1. Those who are within the prohibited

degree (*mahram*);

2. Those who are not within the prohibited degree, but are included in the table of inheritance;

3. Those who are neither within the prohibited degree nor are included in the table of inheritance; but their relationship is known and one feels that they are one's relatives;

4. Those whose relationship is not known.

There is no doubt that the first and second categories are within the circle of *silat ar-rahim;* and the fourth category is surely excluded from its sphere.

But what about the third category? The following two *ahadith* provide the answer:

1. al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said that the Holy Prophet said

> I saw a relation dangling with the *`arsh* (The Throne of Allah), complaining before Allah against one who had severed it. I asked Jibra'il (Gabriel) : "How many generations above do they meet?" Jibra'i1 said: "Seven generations."

2. The Holy Prophet said:

> When I was taken to the heavens (in mi`raj ) I saw a relation dangling with the `arsh complaining of a relative. I asked it: "How many generations are between thee and him?" It said: "We meet in the fortieth forefather."

Obviously the complaint of a relative removed seven or forty generations can be reasonable only when both parties had the knowledge of mutual relationship and still one of them neglected his duties of silat ar-rahim. In other words, the criterion of silat ar-rahim's obligation is the knowledge of relationship, not the distance of that relationship.

42. WAYS OF SILAT AR-RAHIM

What are the ways of silat ar-rahim? What are its highest and lowest grades?

"To love and sympathize with the relatives and do good to them": this is the shortest definition of silat ar-rahim. And all the `ways' of sympathy and good behaviour are the ways of silat ar-rahim.

It was mentioned in the `Rights of Parents' that some of their rights are of `wealth' and others of soul and body. According to Islam, the relatives also have some rights on one's wealth and some on one's soul and body.

The Holy Prophet said:

> Whoever goes to his relatives to do silat ar-rahim with his self and his wealth, Allah gives him the reward of a hundred martyrs; and on every step he is awarded forty thousand good deeds and forgiven forty thousand bad deeds; and his rank is elevated forty thousand grades; and he is treated as though he worshipped Allah hundred years with patience and full attention.

When is monetary help compulsory? It is compulsory *(wajib)* when the person concerned has some wealth left after meeting the necessary expenses of himself and his dependants, and the relative is in need of such help.

Notwithstanding the conditions mentioned above, a Muslim MUST help his relatives as much as possible even when monetary help is not *wajib.*

The Holy Prophet said.:

> Join your relationship even if it is with a drink of water.

On the other hand, the obligation of love and sympathy is unconditional.

To deal with relatives with love, to demonstrate by one's actions and behaviour that one shares their happiness and sorrow, to visit one another's homes regularly, to observe the Islamic ethics in mutual relationship - these are some facets of *silat ar-rahim*, which one can instinctively feel and which cannot be justifiably codified in writing. The Holy Prophet has drawn our attention to these small things by saying

> *Do silat ar-rahim* even if it is by *salam* (salutation).

And now a *hadith* of the Holy Prophet on this very subject: "The best way of *silat ar-rahim* is not to give any trouble to the relative." For those who understand human nature, this *hadith* is a mine of wisdom.

SUMMARY

We may summarize this part in the following sentences:-

1. Islam has made it compulsory to do good to relatives; and `severing of relationship' is (like disobedience of parents) a capital sin whose culprit is not likely to be forgiven.

2. silat ar-rahim means that a person should not give any trouble to his relatives; should deal with them with love and Islamic ethics; should participate in their sorrow and joy; and if possible, should help them financially.

3. silat ar-rahim covers all relatives whose relationship is known; it makes no difference whether they are within or outside the prohibited degrees or within or outside the table of inheritance.

A Reminder

It was shown in Part One that Islam supports the Separate Family System with the provision of silat ar-rahim. Now it should be mentioned that

the concept of relationship in Islam is so wide that even the Joint Family System cannot compete with it.

It proves that `love' and `sympathy' have found their true meaning only in the Islamic *shari`ah.* Without Islam, these words were bodies without soul. No other system can show such open -heartedness, nor can any `ism' bring forward such all-encompassing well-defined family-code. The Holy Prophet said: "I was sent to complete (fulfil) the noble ethics." He fulfilled his task; his holy hands completed the boundaries of Islamic ethics. It is one more proof that he was the Last Prophet and his religion is the Last Religion.

* * * * *

Part Five

RIGHTS OF NEIGHBOURS

43. RIGHTS OF NEIGHBOURS

> *And be good to the neighbour who is your relative and to the neighbour who is not a relative . . .* (Qur'an, 4:36)

Islam has great respect for the mutual rights and duties of neighbours. The Holy Prophet said:

> Jibra'1 always used to advise me to be generous with neighbours, till I thought that Allah was going to include the neighbours among the heirs of a Muslim.

The rights of neighbourhood are not meant for Muslim neighbours only. Of course, a Muslim neighbour has one more claim upon us - that of Islamic brotherhood; but so far as the rights of neighbourship are concerned, all are equal.

Explaining it, the Holy Prophet said:

> Neighbours are of three kinds: (1) that one who has got one right upon you; (2) that one who has got two rights upon you; (3) that one who has got three rights upon you.
>
> The neighbour having three rights upon you is the one who is also a Muslim and a relative. The neighbour having two rights is the one who is either a non-Muslim or a non-relative Muslim.
>
> The neighbour having one right is the one who is neither a Muslim nor a relative. Still he has got all the claims of neighbourhood-rights upon you.

Here are some more traditions which show the Islamic love towards the neighbours:

The Holy Prophet said

> That man is not from me who sleeps contentedly while his neighbour sleeps hungry.

al-Imam `Ali ibn al-Husayn (a. s.) said

These are your duties towards your neighbour: Protect his interests when he is absent; show him respect when he is present; help him when he is inflicted with any injustice. Do not remain on the look-out to detect his faults; and if, by any chance, you happen to know any undesirable thing about him, hide it from others; and, at the same time, try to desist him from improper habits, if there is any chance that he will listen to you. Never leave him alone at any calamity. Forgive him, if he has done any wrong. In short, live with him a noble life, based on the highest Islamic ethical code.

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